NO FORESIGHT? NO PROBLEM

RUNNING AROUND LIKE A REINDEER LOOKING FOR LAST-MINUTE GIFTS & TREATS? OUR GIFT GUIDE CAN HELP PAGES 49-54

CALGARY metro

WEEKEND, December 21-23, 2012

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Where's our Santa Claus parade?

Missing. Calgary appears to be the only major Canadian city without the festive procession

JEREMY NOLAIS
jeremy.nolais@metronews.ca

Ho ho ... hold it, Calgary doesn't have a Santa Claus parade?

Questions of that nature on Mayor Naheed Nenshi's Facebook page around this festive time of year are more common than presents under a tree. And, as it turns out, Santa's sleigh did once lead a pack of decorative floats through the Christmas-themed streets of downtown.

But at a steep annual price tag of $200,000, the Calgary Downtown Association was forced to rein in its holiday hoopla in 2007, cancelling the Christmas parade and focusing on more modest celebrations.

"It was just reaching burnout stage," said association spokesperson Caralyn Macdonald.

"With the resources and the cost, we couldn't continue to put that money into a one-day event."

A statement from Nenshi Thursday indicates he's on board for St. Nick's return — providing corporate sponsors step up as well.

"I know the city would be interested in helping a group interested in organizing the event — as it does with citizens across the city with great ideas for community events," the mayor said.

This year, the downtown association hosted a 12-days-of-Christmas scavenger hunt that wrapped up Sunday, but Macdonald said the group is open to avenues that would bring the parade back.

"A formal parade would have to be a full partnership between the city and downtown association," she said. "The last time we did it, it was quite expensive with road closures ... all the volunteers hours and things people don't think about. It's quite a big endeavour."

The mayor's office opted to keep its cards close to the chest when asked if Nenshi himself would someday be willing to don the big red Santa suit.

Across the country

Other major Canadian cities with a Santa Claus parade:

- Vancouver, Victoria, Edmonton (indoors), Regina, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa, Hamilton, London, Windsor, Montreal, Halifax

Could Calgary get Santa — like the one seen here who marshalled the 2010 Toronto Santa Claus parade — back on city streets so we can celebrate Christmas like the rest of the country? THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

In the spirit of Christmas

Tyler Chisholm decided to give back in a way he knew would make a difference for those dealing with poverty PAGE 4

Wishing you the best of the season

Metro will not be publishing until Dec. 26. Watch for our special Boxing Day preview of 2013

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The headstone for Calgary murder victim Lacey Jones-McKnight. Police believe her death could spur positive progress to root out domestic crimes. CONTRIBUTED

Tragedies spur discussion of domestic crime: Police

Year in review. Crimes involving families and spouses common in 2012 headlines

JEREMY NOLAIS
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Behind closed doors, outside of the public eye, is where many of Calgary's highest-profile crimes occurred in 2012 — a point not lost on the city's police chief.

Looking ahead to 2013, Rick Hanson said he's looking at additional resources for the domestic-conflict unit but details have yet to be formalized.

Then again, the chief suggested, more bodies to review more cases is not always the answer, adding the attitude of society also plays a role in domestic- and child-abuse cases.

"Many people still have the attitude that 'it's none of my business,'" Hanson said. "People have to recognize that you can't somehow passively support domestic violence by doing nothing."

Domestic-conflict unit Sgt. Krista Ryan believes that, although tragic, cases like that of 20-year-old Lacey Jones-McKnight create a "springboard effect" concerning discussion of domestic violence in society.

Jones-McKnight was found dead inside a car Oct. 25. Her accused killer and former boyfriend Kristopher Tray Guenther was reportedly found attempting to hang himself from a nearby bridge.

The tragedy raised questions about police response after Shelly Jones made public claims that she had sought help from 10 different officers in the weeks prior to her daughter's death.

While police are reviewing that matter internally, statistics indicate progress has been made in the overall fight against Calgary domestic violence — namely in the northern communities where a newly established domestic-conflict response team has been operating and incidents have declined by 75 per cent.

"I think, in general, society has no tolerance for domestic violence," Ryan said.

At the Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter, officials saw a 15 per cent jump in reporting of incidents in the weeks after Jones-McKnight's death when compared to the same time frame in 2011. Ryan said she considers an increase in reporting a good thing because it indicates more people are seeking help to get out of their abusive situations.

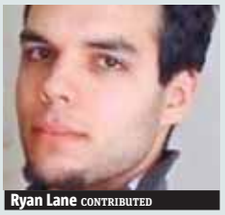
Women's shelter spokesperson Mona Hennenfent agreed that the tragedy put domestic violence square in the spotlight. "It's unfortunate but it provides an opportunity for us to say we need to build awareness," she said. "It's all about prevention."

Quoted

"I want protocols put in place so this never happens again.... If I stop now, this is going to happen to another girl."

Calgary mother Shelly Jones in a November interview with Metro after filing a formal complaint with police concerning the alleged domestic homicide of her daughter

Other high-profile cases:



Ryan Lane CONTRIBUTED

According to his parents, Calgarian Ryan Lane was not involved in a custody battle — he simply wanted to see his daughter again. But police now believe that wish may have led to his demise.

Lane was last seen in February; police did not find his remains until they conducted a search near Beiseker in June.

Sheena Cuthill, the mother of Lane's daughter, her husband Tim Rempel and brother Will Rempel were all charged with first-degree murder in relation to Lane's death. Lane's parents have openly expressed the belief their son was killed in February, when he first went to visit his daughter.

Meika Dawn Jordan CONTRIBUTED

Police ruled in late 2011 that six-year-old Meika Dawn Jordan was the victim of homicide but it would take them nearly a full calendar year to gather enough evidence to lay murder charges against father Spence Lee Jordan and stepmother Marie Eve Magoon.

Police have indicated that Jordan may have suffered while in her father's home prior to her death; third-degree burns were found on her hands and fingers. METRO

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B&E. Warrants issued for alleged jewelry thieves

Police are looking for a man and a woman whom they believe broke into a northeast home and stole large amounts of jewelry and cash.

Arrest warrants have been issued for Christopher James Begg, 36, and Tabatha Marie Negry, 33, according to Calgary police.

Christopher James Begg, 36, and Tabatha Marie Negry, 33, are wanted by Calgary police. HANDOUT

Each is wanted on one count of break-and-enter relating to an incident in September.

Police allege the pair forced open a ground-floor window of a home in the 0-100 block of McHugh Place N.E. on Sept. 25.

Once inside, police say the home was "ransacked" and the jewelry and cash was stolen.

Begg is described as a white male, about six-foot-two in height and weighing 229 pounds. He has brown hair and brown eyes.

Negry is described as a while female, about five-foot-four and 130 pounds. She has brown hair and blue eyes.

Police have released photos of both suspects and are asking anyone with information about either person to contact Crime Stopper anonymously by phone at 1-800-222-8477, by text to 274637, or online at tttTIPS.com.

METRO

Parking lot incident

RCMP investigate alleged shooting at CrossIron Mills

Officers are working to piece together what led to a shooting in the CrossIron Mills shopping centre parking lot Wednesday evening.

According to RCMP Cpl. Darrin Turnbull, around 6 p.m. a 42-year-old man, who was previously known to police, was driven to the Peter Lougheed Hospital by another person, where it was determined he was suffering from a gun shot.

Some witnesses were questioned but Turnbull said the Airdrie RCMP are hoping additional witnesses come forward.

Those with information about the incident are asked to call 403-945-7267.

METRO

Burst pipe. Parts of Auburn Bay flooded

Water pooled several inches deep on streets in a southeast neighbourhood on Thursday after a pipe broke on private property.

A city water-services spokesperson said Thursday afternoon the pipe was being repaired by private contractors and city crews were sent to the scene merely as a precaution.

"We sent our crews out just to make sure," the spokesperson said. "Sometimes catch basins freeze up when there is cool weather and winter, but everything is clear and we can take any runoff. It will naturally run off into the storm sewer."

The Calgary Fire Department sent one engine to Auburn Bay, but firefighters departed shortly afterwards, according to the Battalion Chief on duty. METRO

Red Express donor Mike Keller of Trendon Bit Service, left, founder Tyler Chisholm and CUPS executive director Carlene Donnelly share donated children's items with Keirra and William. LISA WILTON/FOR METRO

Red Express donations to CUPS help families in need

Join the initiative. Local entrepreneur encourages Calgary companies to give back this season

LISA WILTON
calgary@metronews.ca

Filling out 400 Christmas cards for clients wasn't getting Tyler Chisholm into the holiday spirit.

So, four years ago, he decided to give back in a way he knew would make a difference.

"I didn't think sending cards to clients was creating value for anybody," explains Chisholm, who runs ClearMotive Marketing Group.

"I kind of looked into different options and a good friend of mine introduced me to CUPS. I was just really impressed with what they did and how they did it. And that was the motivation behind Red Express."

Red Express is an initiative that collects donations from companies and individuals for CUPS' non-profit health and education centres. CUPS, in turn, helps families and individuals overcome poverty by giving them the skills and education needed to get back on their feet.

Chisholm says he was impressed by CUPS' focus on helping entire families and liked how he could see the impact his donations were making.

"It started as my own initiative with my company," he says. "But as soon as I told friends about it, they were like, 'That's a great idea. How can we get involved?' And it just started taking off."

This year's donations have already topped $10,000, up from 2011's total of $6,400. The money goes towards children's toys, art supplies, educational games and gift cards.

"It helps contribute to the happiness of the family and the happiness of Christmas," says Chisholm.

Get involved

- For more information on how to get involved with Red Express' CUPS initiative, go to redexpress.ca
- To find out how you can donate directly to CUPS, visit cupscalgary.com or call 403-221-8780.

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Sweet, brilliant music

Calgary music fans were treated to hundreds of great concerts this year at venues ranging from community halls and downtown clubs to the Saddledome. **Metro's Lisa Wilton** looks back at her five favourite shows of 2012.

Refused are not f---ing dead

After a 14-year absence, the Swedish hardcore band hit the road to play tracks from its game-changing '98 album, The Shape of Punk to Come.

Refused fans had their faces pretty much melted off by the blistering double guitar assault of Jon Brannstrom and Kristofer Steen and the precision drumming of David Sandstrom. But it was frontman Dennis Lyxzen's energetic performance that put this concert over the top. The 40-year-old spent more time in the air than on the stage.

Wristband bonding at Coldplay show

On the other end of the musical spectrum, piano-driven British rock band Coldplay returned to Calgary and played to a sold-out crowd of 15,000.

The quartet made great use out of the space, making everyone felt as if they had the best seats in the house. The light show was dazzling. Fans were given wristbands, which lit up at certain times, making for a brilliant effect. The audience was literally part of the lighting design.

Brother & sister sing in sweet harmony

There were few better lineups this year than the one the Ironwood Stage saw this past spring. Headliners Good Old War impressed with some sweet harmonies and a great set of alt-country tunes, but the night belonged to The Belle Brigade.

Brother-and-sister duo Barbara and Ethan Gruska were as charming and upbeat as their sunny California country rock. Los Angeles band Family of the Year kicked off the evening with their breezy, catchy melodies and joyful gang vocals.

Garth stripped down is just fine if you're drunk

Country superstar Garth Brooks performed a special sold-out show at the Saddledome to celebrate the Calgary Stampede's 100th Anniversary.

It was the hottest ticket in town this year and those who were able to get in were treated to two-plus hours of Brooks' biggest hits. It was a stripped-down show, but there were few complaints from the happy, and largely drunk, audience.

Big, sweaty hugs for all

The Refused reunion may have been the big news in punk circles, but Toronto melodic hardcore quintet Fu—ed Up proved they were among the genre's best live bands with a fun, sweaty and intense show at the Palomino.

Singer Damian Abraham was his usual bombastic self, getting into people's faces and doling out big, sweaty hugs to whoever was brave enough to get close to the stage.

The other band members were no slouches either, keeping things tight with layers of guitar and pummelling drum beats.

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From closet rappers to recording artists

Genelva "Jaynova" Gibbs performs the title track off her debut album, Beat By a Girl, inside the Beltline Youth Centre's recording studio. JEREMY NOLAIS/METRO

Outreach. Youth centre offers life and vocal lessons to aspiring musicians

Their studio is a hidden gem nestled in downtown Calgary, but the artists coming out of the Beltline Youth Centre are carrying some powerful messages — and major career ambitions.

"It's like a family here," said 19-year-old Genelva "Jaynova" Gibbs, adding that without the centre and its newly renovated recording studio, she would probably still be performing by herself in a garage.

"I probably would be going nowhere — not nowhere, but (moving) very slow," she added.

Programs at the youth centre are run by Big Brothers Big Sisters of Calgary and Area.

Gibbs honed her craft through one such offering known as Track 12, which helps ambitious rappers and hip-hop artists from the local scene and abroad to come together to express themselves, talk about life and get acquainted with Canadian culture.

"Having the different cultures interacting is really cool to see," said program head Dan Bennett, known more commonly in hip-hop circles as Transit. "You'll be in a freestyle (rap) circle and someone will be doing a freestyle about being from Ethiopia and someone jumps in from Nigeria and then someone jumps in from Vancouver."

Gibbs herself is from Calgary and admits her upbringing was not exactly glamorous. Now, with the help of Track 12, she has recently released an 11-track album called Beat By a Girl.

"When she came to us she was a very talented young artist but a lot of her lyrics surrounded street life — drugs, various things that are associated with being street-entrenched or at-risk," recalled Sarah Kemmers, manager of Big Brothers Big Sisters south clubs. "Through her work with Dan Bennett, her lyrics have absolutely transformed. Now, she's rapping about female empowerment and positive messaging and having a positive influence on society."

Gibbs and Bennett pointed out that Track 12 is rooted in humble beginnings — prior to establishing a professional recording studio, program participants traded lyrics in a closet under a stairwell at the centre.

Gibbs seemingly hasn't lost sight of the bigger picture either, openly expressing future hopes to give back to her community by building homes for the underprivileged. But first, there is the more pressing matter of establishing a music career.

"For now, I want to release my album and get a whole bunch of downloads and a whole bunch of views — that's my short-term goal," she said with a laugh.

Beat By a Girl is available on iTunes. Gibbs can be reached by emailing jaynovabooking@gmail.com. JEREMY NOLAIS/METRO

Beltline Youth Centre

- The centre is open seven days a week and offers a swimming pool, weight room and gymnasium, as well as educational and employment support programs.
- There are also frequent workshops and classes in areas like dance and photography.

Records

Albertans with intellectual disabilities suffered abuse

Inadequate training and staff shortages contributed to the abuse of people with intellectual disabilities in Alberta that ranged from physical attacks to burns that were left unattended, say provincial records.

The records from Alberta Health obtained by The Canadian Press under access-to-information legislation say there were 39 incidents of abuse of people with intellectual disabilities for the period between July 1, 2010, and May 1, 2012.

The report chronicles a range of abuses, ranging from shouting to deaths.

The province defines abuse under its Protection of Persons in Care Act as "an act or omission causing serious bodily harm." The law requires an investigator to show an incident of abuse occurred on a balance of probabilities.

The records say two people died in incidents that related to an omission. One person in a wheelchair died in hospital after he fell down basement stairs and another person died after being scalded by hot water.

There were a total of 21 cases of staff abusing people in their care, the reports say. There were also 18 cases of residents abusing other residents where investigators decided staff could have taken steps to prevent the abuse.

Frank Oberle, the associate minister responsible for persons with disabilities, says he's confident care homes in the province are safe and the number of abuse cases are small.

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Confessions of a Calgary doomsday survivor

Secrets and lies. With the apocalypse behind us, we might as well come clean about bicycling skills, penguins, secret parking spots and how we deceive those poor food bloggers

Final reckoning

For the past year or so, I've been acting as if there was no tomorrow and, as it turns out, there is. So I have some things I have to get off of my chest.

IN DEFENCE OF
Mike Morrison
calgary@metronews.ca

If you are reading this, congrats: You survived the apocalypse.

No, not the morning commute into downtown. I'm talking about the whole Mayan calendar thing. Hopefully, you've had an uneventful morning — but that being said, if the apocalypse did happen and Metro was still somehow able to still put out a paper, congratulations are definitely in order to my editors.

So it's Dec. 21 and we're all still alive: now what? The first thing I'm going to do with my newly extended life is apologize. For the past year or so, I've been acting as if there was no tomorrow and, as it turns out, there is. So I have some things I have to get off of my chest.

First things first: I think I may be a terrible biker. Ever since I bought my first bike earlier this year, I've been taking to Calgary's limitless trails like I'm a clean Lance Armstrong. While I always wear my helmet, I'm terrible at using my bell. I just don't want to scare you, and whenever I do ring the bell people seem to jump right into my bike's path. Also, sometimes I bike on the sidewalks because I feel safer.

I'm also sorry if I've ever told you to see the penguins at the Calgary Zoo. The truth is I've never been to see them myself. The long lines and admission price of the zoo has kept me away, yet any time I get asked about them, I tell people to go. "Go see the penguins," I say. "The exhibit is the coolest," I insist. Meanwhile, I really have no idea if what I'm sending them to is really cool, or if it's just like the Deerfoot Mall but with bigger rodents.

I've also been keeping a secret from everyone about one of my favourite neighbourhoods. The Safeway in Kensington has free underground heated parking. This secret will no doubt rock your world, especially if you've ever spent hours in the trendy neighbourhood trying to find parking. I'm sorry, I should have told you about it before. But it's so great that I didn't want the word to get out.

The last secret is for those food bloggers out there, so many of whom I call friends. I don't really like all your photos of food that you post on Instagram. Most of the time, I'm just doing it with the hopes that you'll someday invite me to eat at those fancy restaurants with you. I mean, really, some of you are so skinny, I doubt you're even eating the food. Invite me, I'll eat it.

Scam. Alleged door-to-door fraudster picking up a lot of wives at the airport

Following multiple reports, police are investigating a potential scammer going door-to-door in the city's southeast.

According to the Calgary Police Service, at least 10 reports have been filed in the last month of a man knocking on doors in Acadia and asking for money.

Police say the suspect claims to be a neighbour and says the cash is to pay for a taxi to the airport to pick up his wife. He claims his credit and debit cards are not working.

Several people have given the suspect money and in some cases have driven with him to the ATM, according to police.

Investigators believe the same man is responsible for multiple incidents.

They describe the suspect as a white male in his mid-30s. He's about six-foot-one, 175 lbs. and was reportedly wearing a blue baseball cap with "DC" on the right side, a black leather jacket, grey hoodie, jeans, black gloves and black shoes.

Police are reminding Calgarians to be aware of potential scammers and are asking anyone who may be approached by this suspect to call the police non-emergency line at 403-266-1234.

If a suspected scammer refuses to leave when asked, call 911, police advise. METRO

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Slain teacher protected students from gunman

Mourners exit a church in Katonah, N.Y., after the funeral for Anne Marie Murphy on Thursday. Murphy was killed when Adam Lanza walked into Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., Dec. 14, and opened fire.
LINDSAY NIEGELBERG/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sandy Hook shooting. 52-year-old one of six educators killed in Newtown massacre

A teacher who authorities said died trying to protect her students in the Connecticut school shooting that left 28 people dead was laid to rest Thursday.

Anne Marie Murphy, 52, was remembered as a teacher who "brought together a community, a nation, a world, now awed by her own life and death," in a eulogy by Timothy Dolan, Archbishop of New York.

Murphy's father, Hugh McGowan, said authorities told him that she died trying to protect her young pupils. Her body was found covering a group of children's bodies as if to shield them, McGowan said.

About 15 people arrived at St. Mary of the Assumption Church in Katonah, N.Y., in a yellow school bus with "Newtown," the name of the Connecticut town where the shooting occurred, written on its side. The church quickly filled and about 100 mourners waited outside.

A Justice Department official said the country's top lawyer, Attorney General Eric Holder, would visit the town Thursday to meet privately with first responders and law-enforcement officials.

At least nine funerals and wakes were held Wednesday for those who died when 20-year-old gunman Adam Lanza, armed with a military-style assault rifle, broke into Sandy Hook Elementary School and opened fire. He killed six adults and 20 children, all of them six or seven years old.

More tributes were scheduled for Friday and Saturday.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Archbishop

"Annie's life and death brings light, truth ... and love to a world often shrouded in darkness ..."
Timothy Dolan, Archbishop of New York

The best defence ... Teachers at Texas school to carry firearms

In the tiny Texas town of Harrold, children and their parents don't give much thought to safety at the community's lone school — mostly because some of the teachers are carrying concealed weapons.

The nearest sheriff's office is 30 minutes away, and people tend to know — and trust — one another. So the school board voted to let teachers bring guns to school.

"We don't have money for a security guard, but this is a better solution," superintendent David Thweatt said. "A shooter could take out a guard or officer with a visible, holstered weapon, but our teachers have master's degrees, are older and have had extensive training. And their guns are hidden. We can protect our children."

In the awful aftermath of last week's Connecticut elementary school shooting, lawmakers in a growing number of states — including Oklahoma, Missouri, Minnesota, South Dakota and Oregon — have said they will consider laws allowing teachers and school administrators to carry firearms at school.

Community support

"I think it's a great idea for trained teachers to carry weapons.... But I hate that it has come to this."
CaRae Reinisch, resident of Elliott, a town near Harold

Texas law bans guns in schools unless the school has given written authorization. Arizona and six other states have similar laws with exceptions for people who have licenses to carry concealed weapons.

Harrold's school board voted unanimously in 2007 to allow employees to carry weapons. After obtaining a state concealed-weapons permit, each employee who wants to carry a weapon must be approved by the board based on his or her personality and reaction to a crisis, Thweatt said.

Employees also must undergo training-in-crisis intervention and hostage situations.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Gun control

NRA to comment on gun violence

Now that President Barack Obama has demanded "real action, right now" against U.S. gun violence, attention turned Thursday to the coming "major news conference" by the country's top gun lobby, whose power for years has contributed to the political hesitation around the issue.

The National Rifle Association has promised to make its announcement Friday — the last real work day before Washington, and the rest of the country, scatters for the long Christmas holiday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Gun charges

Sask. politician to appear in court

A former Saskatoon mayoral candidate has appeared in court to face charges related to an alleged disagreement at a bar.

Clay Mazurkewich, who came in a distant third in October's municipal election, is accused of possessing weapons dangerous to the public.

Al Werner, a customer at the Coachman Lounge, says he and Mazurkewich were having a disagreement Wednesday when the would-be politician pulled out a gun.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

Volunteer veteran stands guard at California school

A Marine veteran of Iraq and Afghanistan took up self-imposed duty in front of a central California elementary school in the wake of the Connecticut shooting.

Hughson Elementary School Principal Laura Fong said Sgt. Craig Pusley stood all day Wednesday in fatigues in front of the flag pole at the school just southeast of Modesto. He was not armed.

Pusley, who served two tours in Iraq and one in Afghanistan before leaving active duty last year, told Fong that "he wanted to make the kids feel safe in light of what happened at Sandy Hook Elementary," the principal said.

The veteran Marine arrived at the K-3 school a little before 7:30 am, Fong said, and asked permission to stand guard.

Sgt. Pusley is a father of a three-year-old and his wife is expecting another child. He told the Modesto Bee that he decided to take action after reading a Facebook post urging soldiers to be posted at every school in the wake of last week's tragic shooting in Connecticut.

"When I enlisted, I swore to defend this country from all enemies, foreign and domestic," Sgt. Pusley said. "I just want to be sure all these kids go home safe for Christmas."
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

U.S Marine Corps Reserve Sgt. Craig Pusley stands guard as kindergarten student Liset Corona, 5, walks to her class at Hughson Elementary School on Wednesday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Supreme Court split on freedom to testify in a veil

Balancing act. Ruling says each judge must weigh religious rights and right to a fair trial

A sharply divided Supreme Court of Canada was unable to rule definitively on Thursday whether a woman may wear a religious veil known as a niqab while testifying in court.

In a rare 4-2-1 split decision, the Supreme Court ruled that a witness can cover her face in certain circumstances.

The case pitted two protections in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms against each other — religious freedom versus an accused person's right to a fair trial.

The practical effect of that decision was to pass the case back to an Ontario trial judge who had just begun a preliminary hearing.

The Supreme Court was unable to rule definitively on niqabs in court. MAYA ALLERUZZO/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

In this case, a Muslim woman sought to wear a niqab while testifying against two men she claims sexually assaulted her as a child.

The men claim the charter allows them to confront their accuser and observe her facial expressions as she testifies. Because of a publication ban, the woman can be identified only as N.S.

Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin wrote for the majority and affirmed the two charter rights should receive the fullest possible expression.

McLachlin spelled out a four-step analysis that the judge at N.S.'s preliminary hearing can now use to determine the issue. The ruling will also be a precedent in other cases.

"The judge must assess all these factors and determine whether ... the salutary effects of requiring the witness to remove the niqab outweigh the deleterious effects of doing so."

The ruling told trial judges to ask themselves three questions: Would requiring the witness to remove the niqab interfere with her religious freedom? Would permitting the witness to wear it create a serious risk to trial fairness? Is there a way to accommodate both rights? THE CANADIAN PRESS

Monkey mom melancholy

Reporters swarm Yasmin Nakhuda as she leaves a hearing about her monkey, Darwin — the Ikea monkey — with his coat in her hands at the Superior Court of Justice in Oshawa, Ont. The custody case is expected to resume in mid-January. RENE JOHNSTON/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

First Nations protest

Woman charged in hammer attack

A woman is facing a mischief charge after footage of her attacking a First Nations protester in London, Ont., was posted on YouTube.

The video shows a woman walking out of an apartment building, talking briefly with protesters, then hitting a car with a hammer. ANGELA MULLINS/METRO IN LONDON, ONT.

Edutainment

Teacher in trouble over drag video

In the small community of Brentwood Bay on Vancouver Island, a video featuring bikini-clad drag queens has been deemed too racy for the classroom.

Brentwood Elementary School teacher Joe Winkler showed the clip to his Grade 4 students as an introduction to transgender issues.

After parent complaints, Winkler was suspended without pay pending an investigation in January. LUKE SIMCOE/METRO ONLINE

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Marineland. Inspectors set to take a look at animal graves

The provincial Environment Ministry is poised this week for a sweeping inspection of Marineland's mass graves of animals — graves it had no idea existed because the park has no permits.

The Niagara Falls, Ont. tourist attraction has dug pits for decades to dispose of its animals, using heavy machinery to cover them up, according to former staffers.

There are four mass graves, two of them containing "more than 1,000 animals," said Marineland's former land-animal supervisor Jim Hammond.

Asked Wednesday if it has permits for its animal graves, Marineland spokesperson Ann Marie Rondinelli wrote in an email: "One of life's sad truths is that animals sometimes die in zoos, just as they do in the wild.

"Here at Marineland we have the greatest respect for the beautiful animals in our care in both life and death."

The graves contain the corpses of whales, dolphins, sea lions, seals and walruses, as well as bears, bison, deer and other animals at the park, which opened in 1961 under its owner John Holer.

Environment Ministry spokesperson Kate Jordan said the inspection was a "high priority" and a team was being assembled late Wednesday. The ministry found out about the mass graves when Torstar News Service called to ask about the legality and environmental impact of massive burial sites.

The province requires waste permits to dispose of animal corpses. Jordan said there are protocols surrounding the proper way to bury animals, periodic inspections of the sites and soil and water testing for contamination.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Eight years later. Deering sisters win court case against City of Oshawa

A high-profile court battle between Erica and Shannon Deering and the City of Oshawa, Ont. ended with a win for the quadriplegic sisters, eight years after the car accident that left them with catastrophic spinal injuries.

In a ruling released Thursday, the Supreme Court of Canada sided with a 2010 trial judge decision. That ruling found Oshawa and Scugog, Ont. two-thirds liable for the crash because of a lack of road markings and a failure to post speed limit signage on Coates Rd., a hilly, rural road that divides Scugog and Oshawa.

The decision ends a years-long court saga — which has included appeals to both Ontario's and Canada's Supreme Courts — and establishes that municipalities have a duty to make country roads safe for drivers.

While the details of their compensation are confidential, Port Perry, Ont. sisters will be awarded enough money to be "cared for and have a good quality of life" for the rest of their lives, says their, lawyer Roger Oatley.

The initial damage claims by the Deerings totalled more than $30 million.

In August 2004, Shannon Deering was driving her sister and three friends to a movie when she saw oncoming headlights while driving on Coates Rd. Believing the car was driving right at her, she veered into a ditch. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Genital mutilation

UN calls for ban on female circumcision

The UN General Assembly unanimously approved a resolution Thursday calling for a global ban on female genital mutilation, a centuries-old practice stemming from the belief that circumcising girls controls women's sexuality and enhances fertility.

It has also been linked to religious and cultural practices, although Muslim and Christian leaders have spoken out against it.

Although not legally binding, General Assembly resolutions reflect international concerns and carry moral and political weight.

The UN said in 2010 that about 70 million girls and women had undergone the procedure, and the World Health Organization said about 6,000 girls were circumcised every day.

The resolution calls on the UN's 193 member states to condemn the practice and launch education campaigns to eliminate it.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The 13 to watch in 2013

Portraits of society's rising stars were photographed at the corner of Yonge and Dundas in Toronto on Wednesday. In the front row: Lindsey Stewart, Dane Clark and Patrick Gunning. In the middle row: Amanda Lee Kew, Grant van Gameren, Cara Gee, Shadya Yasin, Jordan Subban and Dr. Samir Sinha. In the back row: Maria Franke, Dr. Danielle Martin, Yu-Ling Cheng and giant panda Er Shun. LUCAS OLENIUK/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE.

No monkeying around on flights

Apes on a plane. Air Canada no longer transporting primates for research purposes

A Canadian regulator has ruled that Air Canada is within its rights to refuse to transport primates that are being used for research.

A Canadian Transportation Agency tribunal issued its decision Thursday, dismissing the complaints of health research groups arguing the airline should be required to carry the animals. It says that Air Canada's restrictions are reasonable and aren't discriminatory because the carrier risks losing passengers who disagree with research using primates.

The original complaint against the air carrier's policy came from Steven Liss, vice-principal of research at Queen's University, and the Public Health Agency of Canada. They argued the policy unfairly discriminates against them.

However, Air Canada argued that it has received 47,000 letters from the public protesting its transport of primates being used for research, and some people threatened to stop travelling with the airline if it didn't refuse to carry the research animals.

The agency accepted in its decision that Air Canada had a legitimate concern of losing passengers that far outweighed the possible loss of income they earn from transporting the primates.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"Queen's University also points out that animals may need to be transported several thousand kilometres by truck through the United States ... and Canada, which may cause unnecessary stress for the animals."

Excerpt from the decision

Scientists have sights set on new planets

Five new planets orbiting a sun very like Earth's own have been detected just 12 light years away, an international team of astrophysicists reports.

One of those planets sits in the "habitable zone" just far enough away from the star Tau Ceti to support water and thus life similar to Earth's.

Tau Ceti is a celestial neighbour in our Milky Way Galaxy, visible just by looking up at the night sky. Scientists have long studied it but never before found evidence that it had planets circling it.

Researchers from England, Finland, Chile, Australia and the United States took 6,000 observations from three different telescopes then constructed a new system of algorithms to figure out what the noise signals they picked up could mean.

"I am very confident that the signals are there," lead author Mikko Tuomi of the University of Hertfordshire told Torstar News Service.

What scientists can't say with absolute certainty is that the signals are planets, even though they behave like planets in orbit and they can't see what else they could be.

"We initially believed that there are no planets," said Tuomi of the start of the study. They expected to use Tau Ceti as a target for their work with a new noise-modelling system.

The discovery, fellow study researcher Steven Vogt said, helps support astrophysics' rapidly coalescing point of view that most stars have their own planets and many of those planets are going to be like Earth. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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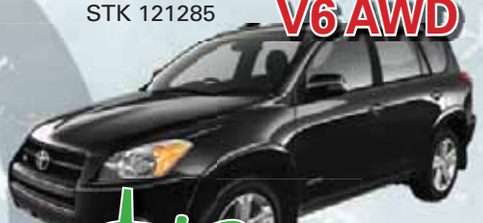

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Four dead as snowstorm slams Midwestern U.S.

Cameron Jones gets some help after getting stuck in a snowbank in Omaha, Neb., on Thursday after the first major snowstorm of the season. THE OMAHA WORLD-HERALD/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Winter arrives. Slippery roads, cancelled flights and blankets of snow may put a damper on holiday travels

Four people died as the first major snowstorm of the season hit the U.S. Midwest early on Thursday, threatening to disrupt some of the United States' busiest airports before the holiday weekend.

Forecasters warned that heavy snow coupled with strong winds could create blizzard conditions from Kansas to Wisconsin after the storm blanketed the Rocky Mountains earlier in the week.

In Chicago, officials at O'Hare International Airport reported more than 90 cancellations.

In Iowa, state police said a 25-vehicle pileup killed at least one person.

In Wisconsin, sheriff's officials said slick conditions led to at least two deaths late Wednesday when a driver lost control of his car. In Utah, a woman who tried to walk for help after her car became stuck in snow died Tuesday night. Search-and-rescue crews on snowmobiles found her buried in the snow.

The heavy, wet snow made some unplowed streets in Des Moines nearly impossible to navigate in anything other than a four-wheel drive vehicle. Even streets that had been plowed were snow-packed and slippery. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Southern toll

- **Mobile, Ala.** High winds peeled the roofs off buildings and toppled trucks but no one was injured.
- **Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama.** Tornado warnings remained in effect in parts of these areas.

Environment Canada. Prolonged warm weather was the big story of 2012

Canada coped with a slew of natural disasters from freak storms to floods this calendar year, but the country's meteorological watchdog says Canadians will remember 2012 as the year when the weather was too hot to handle.

Environment Canada says unusually high temperatures from coast to coast ranked as the top climate story of the year.

Senior climatologist David Phillips says Canadians experienced warmer than average conditions right through the year, making the stretch from January to November the fourth-warmest on record since 1948.

Phillips says the three-month stretch from July to September was the warmest in 65 years. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Wild winds

19

The number of tropical storms that rolled through North America this year—double the amount of a typical season.

A house sinks in Two Mile, B.C., due to heavy rainfall. Experts say Canadians will remember the heat over natural disasters this year. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Skiers lost

Father and sons rescued at resort

For the second time in less than a week, rescuers have been called out to help people who went out of bounds in a B.C. ski area.

In the latest case, a father and his three sons got lost Wednesday after leaving the marked ski area of the Revelstoke Mountain Resort. The RCMP says they were rescued on Thursday morning. THE CANADIAN PRESS

South Africa

Toad stowed in candlestick

It's a real-life Mr. Toad's Wild Ride.

Animal-rescue officials in South Africa say they found a toad from China hidden inside a porcelain candlestick.

The Star newspaper reported that workers had to break the candlestick to get the toad out. It was still alive.

The animal is not endangered. But because the toad is a possible invasive species for South Africa, workers have to put the animal down. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Olympian working as escort

Double life. After reports of prostitution, runner Suzy Favor Hamilton tweets that she's been working for an escort service for the past year

Three-time Olympic runner Suzy Favor Hamilton has admitted leading a double life as an escort.

She apologized Thursday after a report by The Smoking Gun website said she had been working as a prostitute in Las Vegas.

The 44-year-old Favor Hamilton lives in Madison, Wis. The Smoking Gun said she has been working for the past year for an escort service.

Soon after the story appeared online, Favor Hamilton released a series of tweets saying in part that she was "drawn to escorting in large part because it provided many coping mechanisms for me when I was going through a very challenging time with my marriage and my life."

A middle-distance runner, Favor Hamilton competed for the U.S. at the Olympics in 1992, 1996 and 2000, but did not win a medal. She won seven U.S. national titles.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Suzy Favor Hamilton reacts after winning the women's 1,500-metre run at the U.S. championships in Atlanta in 1999. The three-time Olympian has admitted leading a double life as an escort. JOHN BAZEMORE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Unlucky 2013?

Good luck charms installed in Times Square

Officials in New York City have gathered good luck charms to accompany the unlucky number 13 that will light up when the New Year's Eve ball drops in Times Square.

The New York Post reports that 13 good luck charms will be installed along with the sign atop One Times Square for the celebration that will ring in the new year. The charms include a four-leaf clover, gold coins and a Buddha statue to assuage the fears of any superstitious revelers. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Beauty pageant

Miss Universe crown heads back to the U.S.

An American university student is the new Miss Universe, bringing the crown back to the U.S. after a drought of more than a decade.

Twenty-year-old Olivia Culpo won the title Wednesday night in Las Vegas, replacing outgoing champion Leila Lopes of Angola and beating out 88 competitors from six continents.

Miss Philippines, Janine Tugonon, came in second, while Miss Venezuela, Irene Sofia Esser Quintero, was third. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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London. Assange gives speech from balcony of the Ecuadorean Embassy

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange emerged for a rare public address Thursday, praising jailed U.S. soldier Bradley Manning in an address delivered from the balcony of the Ecuadorean Embassy in London.

Addressing supporters on a cold and wet English evening, the 41-year-old Australian looked fit and healthy despite half a year spent trapped inside the small apartment he shares with diplomatic staff.

He gave no hint that he would end the standoff, which has seen him spend six months as a fugitive from European justice, saying he was holed up at the embassy for fear of the U.S. investigation into his activities.

"While this immoral investigation continues, and while the Australian government will not defend the journalism and publishing of WikiLeaks, I must remain here," he said.

While the U.S. Justice Department has launched an investigation into WikiLeaks' spectacular disclosures of U.S. secrets, Assange is currently wanted by police over allegations of sexual assault stemming from a trip to Sweden in mid-2010.

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange speaks from Ecuador's Embassy in London. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Many WikiLeaks supporters have suggested that the allegations are a ploy to extradite Assange, first to Sweden and then to the U.S. The Swedish government and Assange's alleged victims deny it. Assange listed a series of jailed figures, including Bahraini human rights activist Nabeel Rajab and alleged Anonymous hacker Jeremy Hammond. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Breezy Point's tree of hope

Hand-painted stars painted by children hang from a scorched tree among the ruins of houses in the Breezy Point section of New York, Thursday. One hundred homes in the neighbourhood were burned to the ground during Superstorm Sandy. MARK LENNIHAN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Feds refusing to hand over documents: Lawyer

The Canadian government cannot be allowed to renege on a legal deal with aboriginal people simply because sticking to the terms would cost too much, an Ontario court heard Thursday.

At issue, a lawyer for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission said, is the government's refusal to organize and turn over millions of records related to what he called "the highest level of human tragedy" — the Indian residential school system.

Those records, lawyer Julian Falconer told Justice Stephen Goudge, go to the commission's core mandate of creating a comprehensive and lasting account of the shameful century of abuse.

"One day the light switch went on that this was a really expensive obligation, so history gets changed," Falconer said. "It's all about money."

The commission is asking the courts to clarify the government's obligations under the multibillion-dollar settlement reached in 2007 with victims of the Indian residential school system.

Terms of the settlement included creation of the truth commission now led by Justice Murray Sinclair.

While Ottawa has turned over about one million documents to date, 23 of 24 government departments have now refused to provide the materials and millions of records remain outstanding.

"Pure and simple, that can't be right," Falconer told Ontario Superior Court. THE CANADIAN PRESS

The cost of truth

In the 1990s, thousands of victims sued the churches that ran the Indian residential schools and the Canadian government. The suits were settled in 2007 and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was set up.

- The commission worries that Ottawa's intransigence will make it impossible to complete its work, as required, by 2014.
- Some estimates of the cost of turning over the records are more than $100 million.

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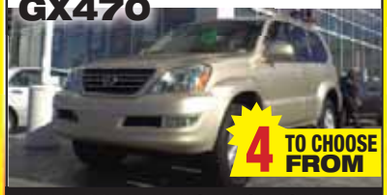

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ReTreaters participate in a seminar with Linda Kennoy, during last year's event in Colorado. PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Weekend of hope for survivors

Breast cancer. Free event in B.C. offers participants yoga, meditation, snowboarding, skiing lessons and cooking classes

LIZ BROWN
liz.brown@metronews.ca

This February, 10 Canadian breast cancer survivors will have the opportunity to spend an all-expense paid weekend at RED Mountain Resort in Rossland, B.C., which will focus on health and wellness — with ski and snowboarding lessons from pro athletes.

Boarding for Breast Cancer (B4BC), the organization that funds the event, will select these participants from entries in a free lottery to be held on Dec. 28.

The weekend, called ReTreat Yourself, is the brainchild of organizer Megan Pischke, a pro snowboarder who first got involved with raising breast cancer awareness 17 years ago, when a fellow snowboarder, Monica Steward, succumbed to the disease at the age of 28.

"(Monica's) legacy has held true with a lot of us, as far as promoting a healthy lifestyle through our sport," says Pischke.

Originally from Colorado, Pischke first offered the retreats in the U.S., but now, as a resident of Canada, she is organizing the first one here in what she hopes will become an annual event.

"I was always involved in awareness and fundraising events and then a girlfriend and I started to do these snowboard retreats," she says. "They marry my lifestyle, which was pro snowboarding, doing yoga, eating healthy and just being connected with the outdoors."

While the weekend offers 10 paid spots for breast cancer survivors, there are also a limited number of spaces available for purchase by the general public, at a price of $1,199, which includes accommodations, meals and all activities over the three days. The retreat offers yoga, meditation, snowboarding and skiing lessons and cooking classes by cookbook author Marianne Abraham.

"When I started doing these retreats in Colorado, my goal was to have women walk away from them full of hope and inspiration and a little more educated," says Pischke.

She cites one example of a woman who attended a weekend in Colorado who told her that the meditation practices she learned on the retreat had shifted her perspectives on fear.

"I've seen a lot of women who get through this … and they're ready to move on, yet they're still holding onto a lot of fear in their life. The meditation helped this woman so she was able to shift her perspective and move past that fear," she says.

Pischke says she's driven to offer these retreats because of the people around her who have been impacted by the disease.

"My grandmother passed away from complications due to breast cancer and it's something I have a lot of empathy for and I really want to stand strong and do as much as I can to raise awareness," she says.

How to enter

The lottery is open to any breast cancer survivor in Canada who has the OK from their doctor to participate in the activities.

- To enter, you can email survivorship@b4bc.org and you will be sent an entry form.
- The deadline for entries is Dec. 28.
- Winners will be contacted Jan. 9 and the retreat takes place from Feb. 2-4 at RED Mountain Resort in Rossland, B.C.

Quoted

"I've seen a lot of women who get through this ... and they're ready to move on, yet they're still holding onto a lot of fear in their life."

Megan Pischke, organizer.

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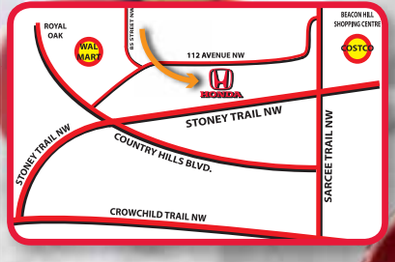

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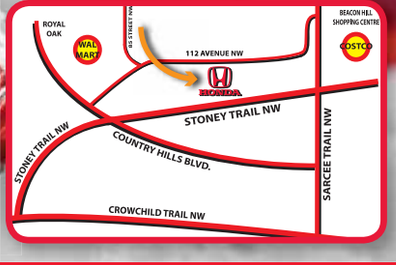

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Y kant Canaydians spel? Blame it on the Internet

Disappearing skills. Digital life is ruining our ability to do basic tasks such as spell properly, recall phone numbers and write by hand

A woman types while surfing the Internet in North Vancouver on Wednesday. Our continued reliance on technology means we're no longer very good at undertaking manual, old-fashioned tasks. JONATHAN HAYWARD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canadians may be among the world's most prolific Internet users, but it seems all that time online hasn't made us a nation of careful spellers.

Many of us often type "facebok" into Google and rather than correcting the obvious mistake, let the search engine fix it. Monitoring Canadians' search habits would reveal that many, many more consistently type in "faceboo," "faebook" and "fcaebook" — but they know Google will get the point.

Others can't be bothered to tap out even eight characters and have learned that entering just "face" or "fb" will get them exactly the link they're seeking.

Is that lazy or efficient? Should we be thanking Google's engineers for saving us a few seconds or lament that technology is dooming us to intellectual laziness?

It seems hardly anyone can remember phone numbers anymore since we starting storing them in our mobile phones.

Outside of schools and some workplaces, the practice of putting pen to paper is becoming increasingly rare. To many, scribbling with a pen feels quaint in today's digital age.

Who needs maps and a sense of direction with GPS technology — which is now nearly ubiquitous on smartphones and tablets — to guide the way?

And now voice-recognition software is exploding in efficiency and popularity, raising the prospect that typing could eventually become another skill that's made redundant by convenient, task-relieving technology.

For Matthew Thomas, 33, it was the signing of a birthday card that made him consider just how infrequent old-fashioned manual tasks like handwriting have become in his typical routine.

"I realized how rarely I'm actually ever writing anything by hand and there was like a moment of panic where I felt a little scared because as I was writing I was having a hard time," Thomas said, noting that he felt the need to concentrate more and think about the act of writing compared to the automatic process of typing. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"When you're typing ... you don't have to think — (and autocorrect) thinks for you. So I was like, 'Wow, I'm really scary now when I don't have Google or spell-check to help me out.'"

Matthew Thomas, 33

Wireless industry. Data use fuels revenue growth

Here's my cell number. Call me, maybe? Or maybe not. Cellphone users are doing less calling as they buy more smartphones and use the device for texting, emailing, web surfing, mobile apps, social networking and watching videos.

And it's that surge in data use that Canada's telecom companies — big and small — are banking on as the revenue driver of the future. "It's no longer just your teenage kids. It's everybody," telecom analyst Brahm Eiley said. "They use their phone the way they would use their PC," he added.

Dan Maitland has an iPhone and hardly uses it for calls. "These are not just phones," said Maitland, 39, who makes software that helps train pilots to be safer at flight simulator company CAE Inc. in Montreal.

"They are small computers that have the ability to make a phone call."

Maitland said he uses his iPhone for such things as web searches, apps, accessing files for work and reading. And he is doing exactly what wireless providers expect and want him to do to help increase their data revenues in the years ahead.

The amount of voice minutes used by consumers on cellphones isn't increasing, said Eiley, co-founder of the Convergence Consulting Group in Toronto. "Over the last two years, voice minutes have not seen any growth, whereas smartphone penetration has almost doubled." THE CANADIAN PRESS

By the numbers

55%

The Convergence Consulting Group expects that about 55 per cent of all cellphone users in Canada will have smartphones by the end of this year. That's expected to increase to 65 per cent by the end of 2013 and go up to 80 per cent by year-end 2016.

Drink up! Dairy farmers depend on eggnog rush

As you raise a glass of eggnog over the holidays, consider that you're making the season brighter for the country's farmers.

There's typically a decline in milk consumption over the holiday period as people turn to boozy beverages, and some dairy producers say that eggnog sales are key in offsetting that slump.

Andrew Taylor, plant manager at Hewitt's Dairy in Hagersville, Ont. said the operation sees an increase of 10 to 15 per cent in sales — usually lasting from the beginning of December until early January — and that eggnog is the beverage behind the jump.

"Overall milk sales tend to fall in December as people tend to drink other things, usually an alcoholic beverage, so anything that compensates for that is something that we look forward to," said Taylor. MORGAN MODJESKI/METRO IN SASKATOON

According to some dairy farmers, eggnog sales help compensate for decreased milk consumption over the holidays. FLICKR/REESECLLOYD

Quoted

"We rely on (eggnog). Farmers need a consistent market and it helps to maintain that consistency."

Andrew Taylor, plant manager, Hewitt's Dairy in Hagersville, Ont.

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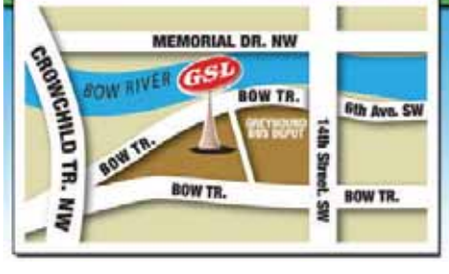

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AMVIC

MAPLE SYRUP HEIST, RAPTORS BACK ON THE BALL AND A TOP-10 HIT

THE LIST
Mike Benhaim
metronews.ca

1 **Say what?** South African President Jacob Zuma maintains leadership of the currently ruling African National Congress party by defeating deputy president Kgalema Motlanthe with a dubious 75 per cent majority vote. Perhaps it's just that the robocalls had trouble pronouncing the name Kgalema Motlanthe.

2 **Slap-happy.** Researchers at the University of Pittsburgh have created a sophisticated prosthetic arm that can translate brain signals into the appropriate movements. While a definite boon for the physically challenged, I raise two concerns: You just know some rich guy is eventually going to buy a couple of extra arms for no good reason, and someone having a bad dream will end up slapping the heck out of their bed-partner.

3 **Holy crepes.** After a huge manhunt, Quebec police have arrested more than a dozen accused assailants in what will one day be known as the Great Maple Syrup Heist of 2012. Officers also recovered important paraphernalia used in the production of maple syrup, and around $18 million worth of our nation's most delicious natural resource (I believe that's street value). The province has been dealing with controversies over corruption and organized crime, but they'll be damned if they are going to sit by and let citizens endure Christmas with dry, unsavoury pancakes.

4 **Bac off.** Dollarama has pulled two brands of cleansing wipes from its shelves after tests by CBC News revealed unacceptable levels of bacteria. It's reassuring to know that all of the other products we use to rid our skin of impurities contain "acceptable" levels of bacteria.

5 **Kill me, maybe?** The votes are in, and Carly Rae Jepsen's Call Me Maybe is the song of the year. While I am pleased for our homegirl, after the millionth listen I respectfully request, for the love of God, that someone call this girl already!

6 **Fields of dreams.** The Toronto Raptors welcomed back Landry Fields, who was cleared by team doctors after undergoing elbow surgery over a month ago. The team is on a four-game winning streak, and Fields is anxious to jump in and get them back to their comfort zone.

7 **Winter wonders.** Monkeys shopping, eagles snatching babies, cows falling from trucks — it brings to mind fond memories of something my mother used to say: "If your flying baby cries over a truckload of spilled cows, no one's ever going to buy your sharp-dressed monkey." In fairness, English was not her first language.

8 **And the winner is ...** Cassadee Pope. Pope is now officially The Voice. Fans voted for The Personality as well, but to me she'll always be The Legs. Congrats, Cassadee.

9 **My favourite things.** This week in 1985, Born in the U.S.A. by Bruce Springsteen surpassed Michael Jackson's Thriller as the second-longest-lasting album on Billboard's American Top 10. It stayed there for 79 weeks. So what mega-singing sensation is powerful enough to top these two superstars for the honour of being No. 1? At 109 consecutive weeks ... Julie Andrews with The Sound of Music. Of course it was.

Follow The Metro List on Twitter @TheMetroList

The Sound of Music has fought off the likes of Born in the U.S.A. and Thriller in retaining the record for most consecutive weeks on Billboard's Top 10. CONTRIBUTED

May your days be merry and bright

MATT YORK/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Christmas circuit

Don't get blinded by the lights

A woman walks along Natal Circle viewing Christmas lights in Gilbert, Ariz., in this photo taken earlier this month.

As Christmas decorations light up across the globe, take these precautions to avoid a holiday mishap.

• **Sparkle without the spark.** Turn off the electricity to the supply outlet before working with outdoor wiring. Unplug light strings before replacing bulbs and check to ensure replacement bulbs match the voltage and wattage of the original. To avoid a shock from damaged wire, use insulated fasteners rather than metal nails or tacks to hold light strings in place.

• **Stay dry.** Keep electrical connectors for outdoor lights above ground, out of water, and away from metal eavestroughs. Connect outdoor lighting into receptacles protected by weatherproof ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCI). These can provide protection from electric shock by sensing ground leakage and cutting electrical power.

• **Put your faith in the magic of the holidays but don't fall for fakes.** Avoid counterfeit electronic decorations that haven't been certified for safe use. Look for the mark from an accredited certification organization like CSA Group.

NEWS CANADA

Pales in comparison

Neighbour cops out on lights

An Arizona woman who knew she couldn't compete head-on with her neighbour's elaborate Christmas-light display is attracting attention for her response.

Using red and green lights, Kristina Green of Maricopa, Ariz., spelled out the word "ditto" and made an arrow pointing toward her neighbour's home.

KNXV-TV reports that Green's display is made of around 600 lights. Her neighbour's setup has about 16,000 colourful lights. Green has created a Facebook page for her "ditto" sign.

The Christmas light competition heats up for some neighbourhoods, while other neighbours go with a "ditto" sign and an arrow. SCREEN GRAB

Last year, a family in Beaverton, Ore., also erected the word "ditto" with an arrow on the side of their own home toward a neighbour's house as part of an online movement.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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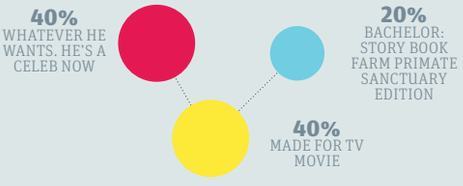
What's next for the Ikea monkey?



Twitter

@autumncollectiv: Tempted to carry febreeze on #yyctransit #yyc I know you know you smell horrible people. Tighten your game up!

@FacepalmMom: Dude, the reason your Z4 has a license plate that says "ZONDA" is because they wouldn't let you have one that says "DOUCHE". #yyc

@acepinball: The #1 reason I'm changing my name is so every time I give someone directions I can follow them up with "AND TELL EM LANNY SENT YA!" #YYC

@Karen_Seda: When there's a line up for the escalator, you're doing it wrong. I promise you its not a carnival ride. #yyc #Calgary #tdsquare

@isabeljanee: The dude beside us in traffic just gave us a huge smile and wave. Happy holidays #yyc

metro

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This is 40 sees Paul Rudd and Leslie Mann reprise their roles as the warring couple in Knocked Up. HANDOUT

Reel Guys

RICHARD CROUSE AND MARK BRESLIN

This is all too familiar

Biting honesty.

Judd Apatow's latest comedy pleases with its realistic take on life in middle age

Richard: Mark, after writing that synopsis, I feel it necessary to remind everyone that this is a comedy, so mixed into this study of midlife disappointment are some keenly honed and very funny observations. It's a blend of heart and humour, frequently in the same scene, and often in the same sentence. When Pete says to Debbie, "We're like Simon and Garfunkel and you turned me into Garfunkel," it's a funny line, delivered well, but also a loaded one that places his unhappiness front and centre. It's that kind of writing and performance that makes you laugh and cringe at the same time. What did you think?

Mark: It's Apatow's best movie, but not necessarily his funniest. The comedy comes intermittently in between stretches of a married couple bickering, experiencing a financial meltdown, problems with their kids and their parents. Just like real life. But I'm not sure the very funny comedy bits redeem the rest of the movie's grim and lacerating honesty.

RC: I think Apatow is trying to get that James Brooks magical mix of funny and raw emotion. The ratio might be a bit off here, but his cast — Rudd and Mann — both bring considerable likeability and comic chops, but temper that with resentment and dissatisfaction. Mann is particularly good. A scene with a hockey player who doesn't realize she is married is funny but framed with a kind of vulnerability that elevates Debbie from stock character to believable person.

MB: I found this movie less sentimental than most of Brooks' work, but the cast does make the bitter pill seem a bit sweeter. Not just Rudd and Mann, but the smaller parts — Albert Brooks and John Lithgow as their respective fathers, Jason Segel as the insufferable personal trainer and Apatow's own daughters as the couple's siblings, all work wonders. And two comic set pieces late in the movie — when most directors would be sprinting to the finish line — one with Charlene Yi, the other with Melissa McCarthy — are comedy gold. Your favourite funny bit?

RC: I loved everything to do with the Graham Parker storyline. As the retro rock act Rudd's character is trying to promote, Parker — who was one of my 1970s real-life punk rock heroes — gamely allows himself to be the butt of a lot of jokes, including my favourite from Chris O'Dowd, who says, "It's hard to watch a band when you know all of them were alive on D Day."

MB: Casting Parker was such an inspired choice! I hope that life will imitate art and people will get interested in his music again. But the movie is full of such inspired offbeat picks. That was Tatum O'Neal as the realtor and radio talkshow hero Phil Hendrie who attacks Rudd after the bicycle crash.

Synopsis

This is 40 takes place in the week between Pete and Debbie's (Paul Rudd and Leslie Mann reprising their roles from Knocked Up) 40th birthdays. Although Debbie lies about how old she is, larger problems include constantly warring kids (Maude and Iris Apatow), an empty bank account made worse by a freeloading father (Albert Brooks), an embezzling employee and relationship doubts triggered by Debbie's loaded question, "If I hadn't gotten pregnant 14 years ago, would we still be together?"

- **Richard:** ●●●●○
- **Mark:** ●●●●○

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The bad. Films that brought us to tears in 2012

Tom Cruise in a campy rock musical. Can it get any worse? HANDOUT

There are a lot of ways to qualify a bad film, which led to some entries not making this list. Some films disappoint by wasting talent and prestige, like the Hobbit, while others come from such uninspired origins that it seems pointless to complain about them. Then there are these 10, which are just plain bad.

Prometheus
This one might not be as objectively bad as others on the list, but it failed on a much grander scale, taking a beloved science fiction franchise, a talented cast and gorgeous cinematography and creating maddeningly thoughtless dreck. Worst of all, a film that was meant to be a prequel ends instead with a presumptuous setup for a sequel. A note to director Ridley Scott: That's not up to you.

One for the Money
This turkey kicked off the year in January and nearly held the title for year's worst the whole way through. Katherine Heigl's attempt to launch herself a franchise based on Janet Evanovich's books is clumsy, painful and plodding, inspiring contempt from its viewers.

Rock of Ages
The poppy hair metal of the 1980s — already not the most soulful music in the world — has any life drained out of it completely in this painfully campy, overlong and uneven trudge down the Sunset Strip. Alec Baldwin and Catherine Zeta-Jones just look embarrassed to be there, and Tom Cruise should be, considering his performance. This movie — storyline and all — was better last year when it was called Burlesque.

Savages
Oliver Stone's over-saturated, bombastic drug war fantasy is filled with overwrought melodrama, empty tough-guy posturing and an ending that is beyond frustrating. But the worst aspect of the film can be summed up in three words: Blake Lively narration.

What to Expect When You're Expecting
Basing an ensemble comedy on a pregnancy manual was probably the first mistake. The second was thinking any of the shrill and unsympathetic characters on display are at all entertaining. NED EHRBAR, MWN

Rounding out the 10 worst

- American Reunion
- The Raven
- Alex Cross
- Red Dawn
- The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn — Part 2

Metro's 10 must-see films from the past year

NED EHRBAR
Metro World News in Hollywood

This may finally be the year that well-made big-budget studio fare finally gets some respect, a cause championed by the likes of Christopher Nolan. Which is awkward, because we were expecting more from his Dark Knight Rises, but he didn't quite stick the landing. If nothing else, 2012 proved to be a delightfully diverse year at the movies. Some runners up for this list include best picture front-runner Argo, Michael Haneke's Cannes favourite Amour and Quentin Tarantino's Django Unchained.

Cloud Atlas
A big, bold, far-reaching tale encompassing six different stories — and six very different visual and genre styles — to explore the enduring power of love and mankind's struggle for freedom. The Wachowskis and co-director Tom Tykwer packed a lot into their 172 minutes, adapting David Mitchell's gorgeous novel into something vital and engrossing.

Zero Dark Thirty
Director Kathryn Bigelow and screenwriter Mark Boal follow up their wins for the Hurt Locker with an even better film tracking the decade-long manhunt for Osama Bin Laden, buoyed by a performance by Jessica Chastain that should earn her a best actress Oscar. The film's greatest feat is presenting all of the facts without an ounce of politicization.

The Impossible
This true-life tale of a European family separated during the 2004 tsunami is incredibly manipulative, but it is some of the most artful, effective manipulation ever committed to film, and for that it deserves respect. It's a harrowing, unflinching look at the struggle for survival that puts viewers through the emotional wringer.

Beasts of the Southern Wild
A startling debut with a six-year-old unknown star (Quvenzhané Wallis) and a look and feel unlike anything seen before, this charming and moving fable is a rare treasure, a visual poem with an equally enduring score co-written by director and co-writer Benh Zeitlin.

Cabin in the Woods
Joss Whedon had one of the year's biggest hits with the Avengers — which nearly made this list as well — but his real triumph this year comes in co-writing this sharp and hilarious deconstruction of the horror movie genre. Once the movie's real game is revealed, the film's giddy energy is infectious.

Rust and Bone
Oscar-winner Marion Cotillard turns in another striking and poignant performance as a whale trainer who loses her legs during an accident at work and rediscovers the beauty of life with the help of a down-on-his-luck bruiser of a single father (Matthais Schoenaerts).

Lincoln
Daniel Day-Lewis is of course the main attraction here, seamlessly transforming himself into the 16th president, but he shares the screen with a dizzying array of fantastic supporting performances, the best of which was Tommy Lee Jones, Lee Pace and James Spader.

Keep the Lights On
Writer-director Ira Sachs mines his own romantic past with aching honesty to tell the story of two men trying to love each other and ignore each other's addictions for nearly a decade. It's an unflinching portrayal of intimacy.

Beasts of the Southern Wild. HANDOUT

Jessica Chastain's performance in Zero Dark Thirty is Oscar worthy. HANDOUT

Anna Karenina
Director Joe Wright and actress Keira Knightley team up for their third literary adaptation — after Pride and Prejudice and Atonement — with this gorgeous and risky translation of the Russian classic. The staging and style are mesmerizing, and Knightley shines, but the real standout here is Jude Law in a career-redefining turn as the cuckolded Alexei Karenin.

Skyfall
Sam Mendes leads the James Bond franchise to a new benchmark in quality just in time for its 50th anniversary, imbuing Daniel Craig's 007 with just the right amount of fun and '60s swagger. A delicious turn by Javiar Bardem as the villain and Roger Deakins' gorgeous cinematography help elevate it to something even more.

Action

Django Unchained

Director. Quentin Tarantino

Stars. Jamie Foxx, Christoph Waltz

●●●●●

Whatever you think of Quentin Tarantino, his movies stand out in an industry full of mediocrity. Django Unchained, the filmmaker's homage to the spaghetti western, is certainly no different — casting Jamie Foxx as the titular slave-turned-bounty hunter. Aided by a smooth-talking "dentist" (Waltz), Django strives to save his wife from a plantation owner played by Leonardo Dicaprio. Hypnotic dialogue and Tarantino's sense of retro-style keep Django smartly entertaining, albeit a bit long at 165 minutes. **STEVE GOW**

Action

Jack Reacher

Director. Christopher McQuarrie

Stars. Tom Cruise, Rosamund Pike

●●●●○

Tom Cruise channels the macho swagger of John Wayne and Robert Mitchum in this refreshingly unpretentious, highly entertaining mystery thriller. Cruise plays an ex-military cop who is called in to aid defense lawyer Rosamund Pike in profiling another soldier who has murdered five civilians. Of course there's more to the serpentine case than meets the eye. Jack Reacher gets an extra star for casting cult German director Werner Herzog as a reptilian psychopath.
CHRIS ALEXANDER

Drama

Cirque du Soleil: Worlds Away

Director. Andrew Adamson

Stars. Erica Linz, Igor Zaripov

●●○○○

The problem with making a Cirque du Soleil movie is that the company's acrobatic shows are more spectacle than the medium of cinema truly allows. And these days, that's saying something. Worlds Away (which is a virtual "greatest hits" from seven Cirque shows) tries to thread a narrative throughout, but even that's lost amongst the thrilling stunts that are still more impressive on stage than in a 3D film.
STEVE GOW

Musical

Les Misérables

Director. Tom Hooper

Stars. Hugh Jackman, Russell Crowe, Anne Hathaway

●●●○○

Chances are, if you're excited to see Les Misérables, you already know what you're in for. Based on the hugely popular stage play, this brooding musical (there are no dance numbers here, folks) stars Jackman as a reformed thief who adopts the daughter of a prostitute in the years following the French Revolution. There's no denying the grandiosity of staging and the device using actors' live vocals leads to impressive performances, but the windy one-takes are just as wearisome.
STEVE GOW

Drama

Smashed

Director. James Ponsoldt

Stars. Mary Elizabeth Winstead, Aaron Paul, Octavia Spencer

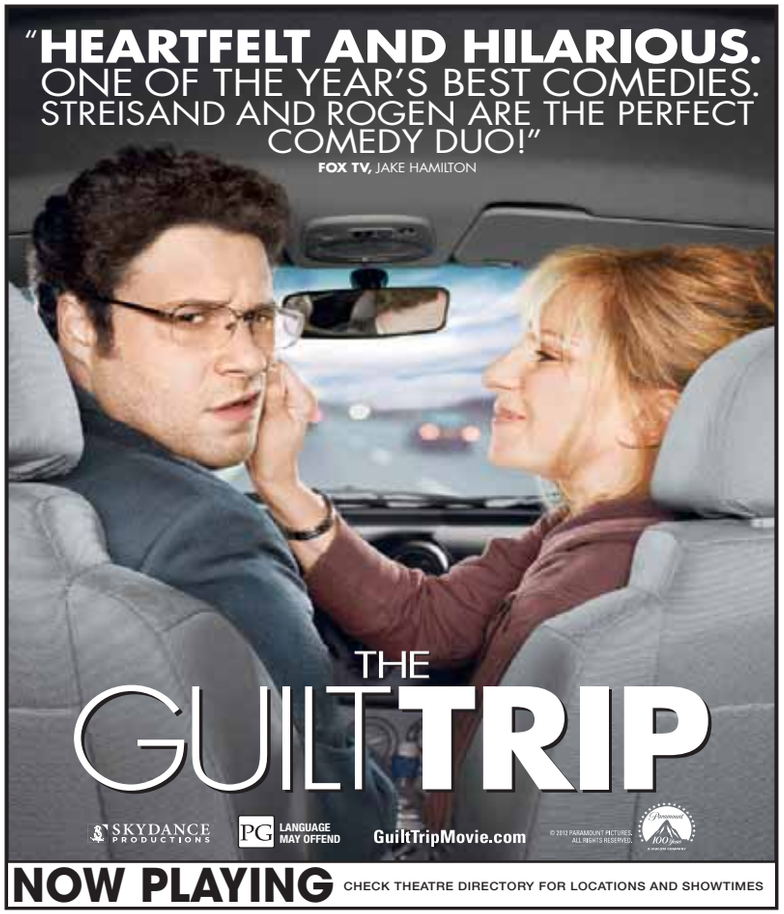
●●●●○

Smashed is a clear-headed look at drunkenness. Mary Elizabeth Winstead and Aaron Paul play a couple on a slow climb to the bottom, watching their lives stagger by through the bottom of a pint glass. It's given a brutally honest (though often funny) depiction of people who don't realize they have a problem until it is too late. By then their world is crumbling, and it is heartbreaking to watch two people in love separated by the pull of a vodka bottle. It's a well acted, compelling and sobering portrait of a person in crisis.
RICHARD CROUSE

Parental Guidance

Parental Guidance, featuring Billy Crystal, Marisa Tomei and Bette Midler opens Christmas Day. Visit metronews.ca/scene to read our review of the film.

HANDOUT PHOTO



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Brave (G) Fri-Sun 1:05-6:45 Mon 1:05 Tue-Thu 1:05-6:45
Cloud Atlas (14A) Fri-Sun 12:45-4:25-8:10 Tue-Thu 12:45-4:25-8:10
Here Comes the Boom (PG) Fri-Sun 12:50-3:45-6:50-9:20 Mon 12:50-3:45 Tue-Thu 12:50-3:45-6:50-9:20
Hotel Transylvania (PG) Fri-Sun 1:25-3:55-7:15 Mon 1:25-3:55 Tue-Thu 1:25-3:55-7:15
Ice Age: Continental Drift (G) Fri-Sun 1-3:40-7 Mon 1-3:40 Tue-Thu 1-3:40-7
Looper (14A) Fri-Sun 1:15-3:50-6:55-9:25 Tue-Thu 1:15-3:50-6:55-9:25
Pitch Perfect (PG) Fri-Sun 12:55-4-6:55 Mon 12:55-4 Tue-Thu 12:55-4-6:55
The Polar Express (G) Mon 1:05-4:30
Red Dawn (PG) Fri-Sun 1:10-4:05-7:25-9:40 Tue-Thu 1:10-4:05-7:25-9:40
Seven Psychopaths (18A) Fri-Sun 9:30 Tue-Thu 9:30
Sinister (14A) Fri-Sun 9:35 Tue-Thu 9:35
Taken 2 (14A) Fri-Sun 1:20-3:45-7:10-9:25 Mon 1:20-3:45 Tue-Thu 1:20-3:45-7:10-9:25
Ted (18A) Fri-Sun 9:20 Tue-Thu 9:20

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(STC) Tue 2:55-6:25-9:55 Wed-Thu 11:25-2:55-6:25-9:55
Django Unchained (18A) Tue 3:10-6:40-10:20 Wed-Thu 11:35-3:05-6:40-10:20
Elf (G) Sat 11
The Guilt Trip (PG) Fri-Sun 12:20-2:45-5:05-7:45-10:20 Mon 12:20-2:45-5:05-7:40 Tue 2:50-5:10-7:45-10:10 Wed-Thu 12:20-2:45-5:15-7:45-10:10
The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey (14A) Fri-Sun 1:30-2:30-5:15-6:15-9-10 Mon 12:15-3:20-3:50-6:55-7:25 Tue 5:30-9:05 Wed-Thu 2:30-6:15-10
The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey 3D (14A) Fri-Sun 12-3-6:45-10:30 Mon 12:45-4:20-7:55 Tue 3-6:50-10:30 Wed-Thu 3-6:45-10:30 Fri-Sun 12:30-4:15-8 Mon 11:30-3:05-6:40 Tue 2:35-6:15-10 Wed-Thu 12:30-4:15-8
Jack Reacher (14A) Fri 1:35-4:35-7:35-10:45 Sat 1-4:35-7:35-10:45 Sun 1:35-4:35-7:35-10:45 Mon 11:40-2:35-5:30-8:25 Tue 4:35-7:35-10:45 Wed-Thu 1:35-4:35-7:35-10:45
Life of Pi 3D (PG) Fri-Sun 12:10-3:55-7-10:10 Mon 11:50-2:40-5:30-8:20 Tue 7:10-10:05 Wed-Thu 7-10:05
Monsters, Inc. 3D (G) Fri-Sun 11:35-2:05-4:30-7:05-9:35 Mon 11:35-2:05-4:30-6:50 Tue 2:40-5-7:20-9:40 Wed-Thu 11:40-2:05-4:30-7:10-9:35
Parental Guidance (G) Tue 2:45-5:20-7:55-10:25 Wed-Thu 11:45-2:25-5:05-7:50-10:25
Rise of the Guardians (G) Fri-Sun 11:50-2:20-4:45-7:15-9:40 Mon 12:10-2:30-4:50-7:10
Rise of the Guardians 3D (G) Tue 2:30-4:50 Wed-Thu 11:50-2:15-4:40
Royal Opera House: The Nutcracker (STC) Sat 12:55
Silver Linings Playbook (14A) Fri 1-4:05-6:55-9:55 Sat 4:05-6:55-9:55 Sun 1-4:05-6:55-9:55 Mon 12-2:50-5:40-8:30
Skyfall (14A) Fri-Sun 11:45-3:10-6:30-9:45 Mon 11:55-3:15-6:25 Tue 3:20-6:30-9:45 Wed-Thu 12-3:15-6:30-9:45
This Is 40 (14A) Fri-Sun 1:15-4:20-7:25-10:35 Mon 12:05-3:30-6:35 Tue 2:30-5:45-9 Wed-Thu 1:15-4:20-7:25-10:35
Wreck-It Ralph (G) Fri-Sun 11:30 Mon 11:45 Tue 2:45 Wed-Thu 11:30

Eau Claire Market
200 Barlay Parade,
403-263-3166

(STC) Tue 4:30-8:15 Wed 12:40-4:30-8:15 Thu 4:30-8:15
Anna Karenina (PG) Fri 6:30-9:50 Sat-Sun 12:20-3:20-6:30-9:50 Mon 3:55-7 Tue 2:55-6-9:10 Wed 12:20-3:20-6:30-9:50 Thu 2:55-6-9:10
Django Unchained (18A) Tue 3:30-7:30 Wed 12:50-4:45-8:30 Thu 3:30-7:35
Hitchcock (PG) Fri 7-9:30 Sat-Sun 12:40-4-7-9:30 Mon 4:10-6:40
The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey (14A) Fri 7:30 Sat-Sun 12-3:40-7:30 Mon 6
The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey 3D (14A) Fri 6-9:40 Sat-Sun 1-6-9:40 Mon 5:30 Tue 4-8 Wed 12-4-8 Thu 4-8
Life of Pi 3D (PG) Fri 7:15-10:10 Sat-Sun 12:30-3:50-7:15-10:10 Mon 4-7:10 Tue 3-6:10-9:20 Wed 12:30-3:50-7:15-10:10 Thu 3-6:10-9:20
Skyfall (14A) Fri 6:45-10 Sat-Sun 12:10-3:30-6:45-10 Mon 3:40-6:50 Tue 2:40-5:50-9 Wed 12:10-3:30-6:45-10 Thu 2:40-5:50-9

Empire Studio 16
Country Hills
388 Country Hills Blvd.,
403-686-8491

(STC) , SR Dolby Digital, Tue 4:15-8:15 , SR Dolby Digital, Wed-Thu 12:15-4:15-8:15
Cirque du Soleil: Worlds Away (G) , SR Dolby Digital, Fri-Mon 1:20-7 , SR Dolby Digital, Tue 4:20-7-9:40 , SR Dolby Digital, Wed-Thu 1:20-4:20-7-9:40
Dabangg 2 (STC) , SR Dolby Digital Fri-Sun 2:45-6-9:10 , SR Dolby Digital Mon 2:45-6 , SR Dolby Digital Tue-Thu 2:45-6-9:10
Django Unchained (18A) , SR Dolby Digital, Tue 5:30-9:30 , SR Dolby Digital, Wed-Thu 1:30-5:30-9:30
The Guilt Trip (PG) , SR Dolby Digital, Fri-Sun 1:10-4:05-7:20-9:45 , SR Dolby Digital, Mon 1:10-4:05-7:20 , SR Dolby Digital, Tue 4:05-7:20-9:45 , SR Dolby Digital, Wed-Thu 1:10-4:05-7:20-9:45
The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey (14A) , SR Dolby Digital, Fri-Sun 1:30-3:30-5:30-7:30-9:30-11:30 , SR Dolby Digital Mon 1:30-3:30-5:30-7:30 , SR Dolby Digital Tue 3:30-7:30 , SR Dolby Digital Wed-Thu 11:30-3:30-7:30
The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey — An IMAX 3D Experience (14A) , SR Dolby Digital, Fri-Sun 12:30-4:30-8:30 , SR Dolby Digital Mon 12:30-4:30 , SR Dolby Digital Tue 4:30-8:30 , SR Dolby Digital Wed-Thu 12:30-4:30-8:30
The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey 3D (14A) , SR Dolby Digital, Fri-Sun 12-1-4-5-8-9 , SR Dolby Digital Mon 12-1-4-5 , SR Dolby Digital Tue 4-8 , SR Dolby Digital Wed-Thu 12-4-8
Jack Reacher (14A) , SR Dolby Digital, Fri-Sun 12:45-3:50-7:10-10:15 , SR Dolby Digital, Mon 12:45-3:50-7:10 , SR Dolby Digital, Tue 3:50-7:10 , SR Dolby Digital, Wed-Thu 12:45-3:50-7:10
Life of Pi (PG) , SR Dolby Digital Tue 3:25-6:40-9:35 , SR Dolby Digital Wed-Thu 12:25-3:25-6:40-9:35
Life of Pi 3D (PG) , SR Dolby Digital Fri-Sun 12:25-3:25-6:40-9:35 , SR Dolby Digital Mon 12:25-3:25-6:40
Lincoln (PG) , SR Dolby Digital Fri-Sun 12:15-3:35-6:45-10:05 , SR Dolby Digital Mon 12:15-3:35-6:45 , SR Dolby Digital Tue-Thu 6:50-10:05
Monsters, Inc. 3D (G) , SR Dolby Digital, Fri-Sun 12:55-3:45-7:05-9:30 , SR Dolby Digital, Mon 12:55-3:45-7:05 , SR Dolby Digital, Tue 3:45-7:05-9:30 , SR Dolby Digital, Wed-Thu 12:55-3:45-7:05-9:30
Parental Guidance (G) , SR Dolby Digital, Tue 3:40-7:15-9:50 , SR Dolby Digital, Wed-Thu 1-3:40-7:15-9:50
Playing for Keeps (PG) , SR Dolby Digital Fri-Sun 4:20-9:40 , SR Dolby Digital Mon 4:20
Rise of the Guardians (G) , SR Dolby Digital Fri-Sun 1:05-3:40-6:55-9:25 , SR Dolby Digital Mon 1:05-3:40-6:55 , SR Dolby Digital Tue 3:35 , SR Dolby Digital Wed-Thu 1:05-3:35
Silver Linings Playbook (14A) , SR Dolby Digital Tue 3:20-6:35-9:55 , SR Dolby Digital Wed-Thu 12:05-3:20-6:35-9:55
Skyfall (14A) , SR Dolby Digital Fri-Sun 12:40-4:45-8:15 , SR Dolby Digital Mon 12:40-4:45 , SR Dolby Digital Tue 4:45-8:10 , SR Dolby Digital Wed-Thu 12:40-4:45-8:10
This Is 40 (14A) , SR Dolby Digital, Fri-Sat 12:10-3:20-6:45-10 , SR Dolby Digital Sun 12:10-3:20-6:45-10 , SR Dolby Digital, Mon 12:10-3:20-6:45 , SR Dolby Digital, Tue 3:20-6:45-10 , SR Dolby Digital, Wed-Thu 12:10-3:20-6:45-10
The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 2 (PG) , SR Dolby Digital Fri-Sun 6:50-9:55 , SR Dolby Digital Mon 6:50
Wreck-It Ralph (G) , SR Dolby Digital Fri-Mon 1:15-3:55

Empire Studio 10
MacLeod Trail
100-16061 MacLeod Trail,
403-974-0470

(STC) Digital Presentation, Tue 4:45-8:30 Digital Presentation, Wed-Thu 12:45-4:45-8:30
Django Unchained (18A) Digital Presentation, Tue 5-9:30 Digital Presentation, Wed-Thu 1-5-9:30
The Guilt Trip (PG) Digital Presentation, Fri-Sun 1:15-4:10-7:20-10 Digital Presentation, Mon 1:15-4:10-7:20 Digital Presentation, Tue 4:10-7:20-10 Digital Presentation, Wed-Thu 1:15-4:10-7:20-10
The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey (14A) Digital Presentation, Fri-Sun 1-5-9:30 Digital Presentation, Mon 1-5 Digital Presentation, Wed-Thu 11:30
The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey 3D (14A) Digital Presentation, Fri-Sun 11:30-12-3:30-4-7:30-8 Digital Presentation, Mon 11:30-2-3:30-6:30-7:15 Digital Presentation, Tue-Thu 3:30-7:30 Digital Presentation, Fri-Sun 12:30-4:30-8:30 Digital Presentation, Mon 3-7 Digital Presentation, Tue 4-8 Digital Presentation, Wed-Thu 12-4-8
Jack Reacher (14A) Digital Presentation, Fri-Sun 12:10-3:20-6:50-10:10 Digital Presentation, Mon 12:10-3:20-6:50 Digital Presentation, Tue 3:20-6:50-10:10 Digital Presentation, Wed-Thu 12:10-3:20-6:50-10:10
Monsters, Inc. 3D (G) Digital Presentation, Fri-Sun 1:30-4:20-7:10-9:40 Digital Presentation, Mon 1:30-4:20-7:10 Digital Presentation, Tue 4:20-7:10-9:40 Digital Presentation, Wed-Thu 1:30-4:20-7:10-9:40
Parental Guidance (G) Digital Presentation, Tue 3:50-6:40-9:20 Digital Presentation, Wed-Thu 12:30-3:50-6:40-9:20
Rise of the Guardians (G) Digital Presentation, Fri-Mon 12:45 Digital Presentation, Wed-Thu 11:45
Rise of the Guardians 3D (G) Digital Presentation, Fri-Sun 3:50-6:40-9:45 Digital Presentation, Mon 3:50-6:40
Skyfall (14A) Digital Presentation, Fri-Sun 11:45-3:15-6:30-9:50 Digital Presentation, Mon 11:45-3:15-6:30 Digital Presentation, Tue-Thu 3:15-6:30-9:50
This Is 40 (14A) Digital Presentation, Fri-Sun 12:20-3:40-7-10:15 Digital Presentation, Mon 12:20-3:40-7 Digital Presentation, Tue 3:40-7-10:15 Digital Presentation, Wed-Thu 12:15-3:40-7-10:15

Globe Cinema
617-8 Avenue, 403-262-3308

The Guilt Trip (PG) Fri 7:10-9:10 Sat-Sun 1:10-3:10-7:10-9:10 Wed-Thu 3:10-7:10-9:10
It's a Wonderful Life (STC) Fri 7-9 Sat-Sun 1:20-3:20-7-9
Parental Guidance (G) Wed-Thu 3:20-7-9:20

Scotiabank Chinook
6455 MacLeod Trail,
403-212-8994

(STC) Tue 2:55-6:40-10:25 Wed-Thu 11:10-2:55-6:40-10:25
Cirque du Soleil: Worlds Away 3D (G) Fri-Mon 1-7 Tue-Thu 12:45-3:30-6:35-9:35
Django Unchained (18A) Tue 3:05-6:50-10:35 Wed-Thu 11:20-3:05-6:50-10:35
Elf (G) Sat 11
The Guilt Trip (PG) Fri-Thu 12:30-3-5:30-8-10:30
The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey (14A) Fri-Mon 1:15-2-5-5:45-8:45-9:30 Tue-Thu 2-5:45-9:30
The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey — An IMAX 3D Experience (14A) Fri-Sun 11:20-3-6:45-10:30 Mon-Tue 12:40-4:20-8 Wed-Thu 11:20-3-6:45-10:30
The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey 3D (14A) Fri-Sun 11-2:45-3:15-6:30-7-10:15-10:45 Mon 12-12:30-3:45-4:30-7:30-8:30 Tue 2:45-3:45-6:30-7:30-10:15-11:10 Wed-Thu 11-12-2:45-3:45-6:30-7:30-10:15-11:10 Fri-Sun 12-3:45-7:30-11:10 Mon 11-2:45-6:25-10
Jack Reacher (14A) Fri-Sun 1:50-4:50-7:50-11 Mon 1:30-4:25-7:15-10:15 Tue-Thu 1:50-4:50-7:50-11
Life of Pi 3D (PG) Fri-Sun 1:35-4:30-7:25-10:15 Mon 1:35-4:30-7:20-10:10 Tue-Thu 1:35-4:30-7:25-10:15
Lincoln (PG) Fri-Sun 12:25-3:40-7:05-10:25 Mon 12:30-3:50-7:05-10:15 Tue-Thu 12:25-3:40-7:05-10:25
Monsters, Inc. 3D (G) Fri-Mon 11:15-12:15-2:40-5:05-7:35-10 Tue 12:15-2:40-5:05-7:35-10 Wed-Thu 11:15-12:15-2:40-5:05-7:35-10
Parental Guidance (G) Tue 2:40-5:15-8:10-10:45 Wed-Thu 12-2:40-5:15-8:10-10:45
Rise of the Guardians (G) Fri-Sun 12:35-3:10-5:35-8-10:25 Mon 12:35-3:10-5:40-8:10-10:35 Tue 12:15-2:30-4:55 Wed-Thu 12:10-2:30-4:55
Royal Opera House: The Nutcracker (STC) Sat 12:55
Silver Linings Playbook (14A) Fri-Sun 1:20-4:20-7:15-10:10 Mon 1:25-4:10-7-9:50 Tue-Thu 1:15-4:10-7:10-10:05
Skyfall (14A) Fri-Sun 12:55-4:05-7:20-10:45 Mon 12:50-4-7:05-10:10 Tue-Thu 12:55-4:05-7:20-10:45
This Is 40 (14A) Fri-Sun 1:30-4:35-7:40-10:50 Mon 1:05-4:05-7:10-10:10 Tue-Thu 1:30-4:35-7:40-10:50
The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 2 (PG) Fri 11:40-2:15-5-7:45-10:40 Sat 5-7:45-10:40 Sun 11:40-2:15-5-7:45-10:40 Mon 1:25-4:20-6:55-9:35 Tue-Thu 7:45-10:40
Wreck-It Ralph (G) Fri-Mon 3:45-9:40 Tue 1 Wed-Thu 11:25

Plaza Theatre
1133 Kensington Rd. N.W.,
403-283-3636

No Films Showing Today (STC) Mon-Tue Smashed (14A) Fri 7-9 Sat 5-7-9 Sun 3-5-7-9 Wed 5-7-9 Thu 7-9

Sunridge Spectrum
2555 32nd Street,
403-717-1200

(STC) Tue 3:10-6:50-10:20 Wed-Thu 11:40-3:10-6:50-10:20
Dabangg 2 (STC) Fri-Sun 11:55-3:05-6:45-9:40 Mon 11:55-3:05-6:45 Tue 3:05-6:45-9:40 Wed-Thu 11:55-3:05-6:45-9:40
Django Unchained (18A) Tue 2-3:30-5:50-7:15-9:30-10:55 Wed-Thu 11:45-2-3:30-5:50-7:15-9:30-10:55
Elf (G) Sat 11
The Guilt Trip (PG) Fri-Sat 12:35-3-5:30-8-10:30 Sun 12:30-3-5:30-8-10:30 Mon 12:35-3-5:30-8 Tue 3-5:30-8-10:30 Wed-Thu 12:30-3-5:30-8-10:30
The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey (14A) Fri-Sat 12-1-2-3:45-4:40-5:50-7:30-9-9:30-11:15 Sun 12-1-2-3:45-4:40-5:50-7:30-9-9:30 Mon 12-1-2-3:45-4:40-5:50-7:30 Tue 3:45-7:30 Wed-Thu 12-3:45-7:30
The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey 3D (14A) Fri-Sun 11:30-3:15-7-10:45 Mon 11:30-3:15-7 Tue 3:15-7-10:45 Wed-Thu 11:30-3:15-7-10:45 Fri 2:45-6:30-10:15 Sat 11-2:45-6:30-10:15 Sun 2:45-6:30-10:15 Mon 2:45-6:30 Tue 2:45-6:30-10:15 Wed-Thu 11-2:45-6:30-10:15
Jack Reacher (14A) Fri-Sun 1:50-4:50-7:50-10:50 Mon 1:50-4:50-7:50 Tue 1:50-4:50-7:50-10:50 Wed-Thu 10:55-1:50-4:50-7:50-10:50
Life of Pi 3D (PG) Fri-Sun 1:30-4:30-7:35-10:40 Mon 1:30-4:30-7:35 Tue-Thu 7:35-10:40
Monsters, Inc. 3D (G) Fri-Sun 11:50-2:20-4:55-7:20-9:50 Mon 11:50-2:20-4:55-7:20 Tue 2:20-4:55-7:20-9:50 Wed-Thu 11:50-2:20-4:55-7:20-9:50
Parental Guidance (G) Tue 2:50-5:25-8:05-10:40 Wed-Thu 12:05-2:50-5:25-8:05-10:40
Rise of the Guardians (G) Fri-Mon 12:10 Wed-Thu 12:10
Rise of the Guardians 3D (G) Fri-Sun 2:40-5:10-7:45-10:15 Mon 2:40-5:10-7:45 Tue-Thu 2:40
Skyfall (14A) Fri-Sat 11:45-3:10-7-10:10 Sun 11:45-3:15-7-10:10 Mon 11:45-3:10-7 Tue-Thu 6:55-10:10
This Is 40 (14A) Fri-Sun 1:30-4:35-7:40-10:45 Mon 1:30-4:35-7:40 Tue-Thu 1:30-4:35-7:40-10:45
The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 2 (PG) Fri-Sun 6:50-9:45 Mon 6:50
Wreck-It Ralph (G) Fri-Mon 12:30-3:10 Tue 2:55 Wed-Thu 12:15-2:55

Westhills 10
165 Stewart Green,
403-246-5291

(STC) Tue 3:10-6:40-10:05 Wed-Thu 11:40-3:10-6:40-10:05
Django Unchained (18A) Tue 3:30-6:55-10:30 Wed-Thu 12-3:30-6:55-10:30
The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey (14A) Fri-Sun 12:30-2:30-4:20-6:15-8-9:50 Mon 12:30-2:30-4:20-6:15-8 Tue 4-8 Wed-Thu 12:20-4-8
The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey 3D (14A) Fri-Sun 1:30-3:5:10-6:40-9:20-10:15 Mon 1:30-3-5:10-6:40 Tue-Thu 2:30-6:20-9:55
Life of Pi 3D (PG) Fri-Sun 1:20-4:10-7:20-10:10 Mon 1:20-4:10-7:20 Tue 3:40-7:15-10:10 Wed-Thu 12:50-3:40-7:15-10:10
Lincoln (PG) Fri-Sun 12:20-3:20-6:30-9:40 Mon 12:20-3:20-6:30 Tue 3:20-6:30-9:40 Wed-Thu 12:10-3:20-6:30-9:40
Parental Guidance (G) Tue 2:20-4:50-7:20-9:50 Wed-Thu 11:50-2:20-4:50-7:20-9:50
Rise of the Guardians (G) Fri-Mon 12:50 Tue 3:45-6:50 Wed-Thu 1:10-3:45-6:50
Rise of the Guardians 3D (G) Fri-Sun 3:10-5:25-7:40-10 Mon 3:10-5:25-7:40
Skyfall (14A) Fri-Sun 12:40-3:50-7:10-10:20 Mon 12:40-3:50-7:10 Tue 3:50-7:05-10:20 Wed-Thu 12:40-3:50-7:05-10:20
This Is 40 (14A) Fri-Sun 1-4-7:30-10:30 Mon 1-4-7:30 Tue 4:10-7:35-10:35 Wed-Thu 1-4:10-7:35-10:35
The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 2 (PG) Fri-Sun 6:50-9:30 Mon 6:50 Tue-Thu 9:30
Wreck-It Ralph (G) Fri-Mon 1:05-3:40
Wreck-It Ralph 3D (G) Wed-Thu 12

TV picks

The Sound of Music airs Sunday on CTV and ABC. HANDOUT

End of the world as we know it?

Some have predicted the apocalypse will strike Friday, and there's some fitting viewing in 2012, like The End is Now (History) and Evacuate Earth (National Geographic Channel). Darker material is also found in a new episode of Haven, which is followed by the Season 3 finale on Showcase.

For the most part, though, the channels are putting out a feel-good vibe with several holiday specials on Friday. Karate Kid headliner Ralph Macchio builds on his Dancing with the Stars experience in the CTV Vancouver-shot dance film Holiday Spin. Vancouver's Allie Bertram (So You Think You Can Dance Canada) co-stars. In the comedy vein is A Christmas Story (CBC) and A Russell Peters Christmas (CTV). For a crooner-carolling vibe, click to Michael Bublé: Home for the Holidays (Citytv, NBC). And for inspiration on how to cook your yuletide meal, there's Chef at Home holiday edition and French Food at Home holiday edition (Food Network Canada).

Deck the Halls

Think you've decked your halls in enviable fashion? You may be humbled by a marathon of Celebrity Holiday Homes, in which three designers create festive decor for the stars on Saturday. Participants include soap star-turned The Biggest Loser host Ali Sweeney, country music artist Jo Dee Messina, game show host Wayne Brady, singer Jordin Sparks and Twisted Sister rocker Dee Snider (HGTV Canada).

Family favourite

Some mirthful holiday programs are repeated ad nauseam at this time of year, but the five-time Oscar-winning The Sound of Music typically isn't one of them. And besides, it's always worth the click to see a dashing Christopher Plummer and hear the dulcet tones of Julie Andrews, who recently admitted that her famous voice has been ruined by an operation to remove non-cancerous throat nodules. It airs Sunday (CTV, ABC).

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Life as they knew it changed, for good

Bomb Girls. Meg Tilly talks about her role as a floor supervisor at Ontario's Victory Munitions during WWII, and how female perspectives were forever altered

ANNE BRODIE
scene@metronews.ca

The Second World War brought Canadian women out of the home and into the workforce. Thousands were employed in an Ontario munitions factory, helping in the war effort, earning their own pay cheques and standing on their own two feet as their men fought overseas. Bomb Girls, starting season two Jan. 4 ET/PT at 8 p.m., continues as they navigate life at Victory Munitions and on the home front. Meg Tilly plays Lorna the floor supervisor:

Lorna's a great leader. She's stoic, efficient and level headed. But her home life is unstable.

That's what I love about her. Everybody has light and dark and joys and sorrows and they're all intermingled. There is no good one or bad one. We finished season one with her pregnant and pregnant women aren't allowed to work on the line. Lorna has always been a by-the-rules person and the whole situation changes her. In season two, because of this, she's not so rigid. She's broken several rules. She did things that were wrong if you're going to go black and white. I think she's got more compassion and sees more shades of grey. That's a shift.

How did the work change women?

It contributed to the feminist movement. All these capable women who were underutilized found themselves out there doing useful things. Usually women would be born in a town, be raised in the town, marry and die in the town. And all of a sudden women made decisions. They came from all over the country to work in the plant.

It's really important to show the change that happened with women. Everything changed, that's what (The Second World War) was to us. The focus is usually on the sacrifices of the men, but now we see the women and how they changed our country and how they effected change. And now I see that time so differently. I think back to my grandparents. I wish they were alive now so I could talk to them about what their experiences were like. People are lucky if they still have people alive who can talk about it. It wasn't that long ago.

Meg Tilly plays Lorna, the floor supervisor, in Global's Bomb Girls. HANDOUT

What happened to the women after the war?

That was a shock. Those were the dark years, some of them call it. All of a sudden it was over. And the men came home and it was changed. And everyone's trying to pretend it was exactly the way it was before the war and it wasn't. Everyone was dealing with this huge shift and women lost loved ones, fathers, brothers, lovers, husbands and they're dealing with other loss, loss of identity and self. They worked and grew and bloomed and felt useful for something other than baby rearing and cleaning the house, and then suddenly they had to ask for permission to buy a hat. I remember seeing interviews from this one woman. She said it only takes so long to clean the house. You're working hard, and then it's gone. And the woman said, "Until I had my baby, those were the dark years."

Bomb Girls is topical, with references to events in Oshawa or the possibility of Nazi planes flying over Canada.

I didn't know how close we came to ... I didn't know. The storylines are amazing. I read (Second World War) tweets every day — 3,000 killed in bombing in England and you see photos of the streets and think, "Wow, how is it possible?" I didn't realize the extent of what happened. You read Hitler meets with so and so. Hitler says he's not invading anyone, and then he invades.

There were Nazi prison camps in Canada?

I know. I didn't know that. And that's in the show.

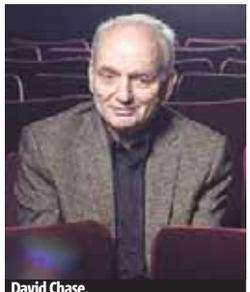
NEED SOME IDEAS FOR GIFTS FROM YOUR KITCHEN THIS YEAR?

ATCO Blue Flame Kitchen ANSWER LINE
1.877.420.9090 MON - FRI 9 AM - 4 PM
BFKanswerline@atcogas.com | www.atcoblueflamekitchen.com

WE CAN HELP.

David Chase. On the infamous Sopranos ending

In a recent interview with David Chase about his new film, Not Fade Away, the conversation inevitably turned to The Sopranos and its infamous ending. Below are Chase's comments on watching the final episode for the first time two years ago, with only an occasional interjection from a reporter:



David Chase.
VICTORIA WILL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Quoted

"There was something else I was saying that was more important than whether Tony Soprano lived or died."
David Chase

"I thought the episode itself might have been kind of a dud, but it wasn't. I was proud of it. I was satisfied that we'd done something. What I didn't understand was that the ending would be so talked-about that it would completely obliterate the rest of the episode that came before it. No one ever even saw it, talked about it, mentioned it or anything about it — and I think, didn't even interpret it correctly because all they talked about was that ending. I did not know that would happen.

I think a lot of people thought they were being made a fool of, that I was being really meta — is that the word? — and postmodern or just showing my quote-unquote 'contempt' for the audience or going 'Ha, ha, ha. It's just a TV show.' None of that was what was going on. That was the best ending I knew to come up with and I thought it said some things, but people didn't get it because they were angry. Or maybe it wasn't executed well.

I do wish that connection had been made better. To me the question is not whether Tony lived or died, and that's all that people wanted to know: 'Well, did he live or did he die? You didn't finish the show. You didn't answer the question.' That's preposterous. There was something else I was saying that was more important than whether Tony Soprano lived or died. About the fragility of all of it. The whole show had been about time in a way, and the time allotted on this Earth. That whole trip out to California was all about that — what people called a dream sequence. And all the dream sequences within the show. Tony was dealing in mortality every day. He was dishing out life and death. And he was not happy. He was getting everything he wanted, that guy, but he wasn't happy. All I wanted to do was present the idea of how short life is and how precious it is. The only way I felt I could do that was to rip it away. And I think people did get it. It made them upset emotionally, but intellectually they didn't follow it. And that could very well be bad execution."
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Could it be boiling-over drama on Downton Abbey this season?

Interview. Downton's cook weighs in on life on set and gives us a taste of how things may pan out for the Crawley family and their minions in the third season

STEPHEN ERAMO
scene@metronews.ca

In 2010, a British-American period TV drama called Downton Abbey took the world by storm. Three seasons later, fans still eagerly tune in to watch the latest goings-on in the lives of the aristocratic Crawley family and their servants, all of whom live together in the fictional Yorkshire country estate of Downton Abbey.

Keeping everyone well-fed is Downton's cook, Mrs. Beryl Patmore, played by the lovely and talented Lesley Nicol. Although it was two years ago, she will not soon forget her first time stepping foot into Downton as Mrs. Patmore.

"I should explain that all my scenes are shot at Ealing Film Studios in London," says Nicol. "The kitchen, the servants' quarters and hall, and the corridors are all sets at Ealing, and then an hour away is Highclere Castle (which plays as Downton Abbey). They shoot all the upstairs scenes there, and because Mrs. Patmore, for legitimate reasons, doesn't stray far from her kitchen, I rarely get to Highclere.

"So for me to film a scene in the library with Hugh Bonneville (the Earl of Grantham) was quite extraordinary, not only because it's such an amazing room and building, but also to watch my character go from the safety of her kitchen to be with her boss, who she hardly knows and is scared of. That was very memorable for me and great fun, too."

Quoted

"Although I can't speak in detail, I can say that in season three, you'll see much more of Mrs. Patmore and Mrs. Hughes banding together ... which was wonderful to investigate."
Lesley Nicol

A skilled cook who knows her away around a kitchen, Mrs. Patmore can sometimes be a bit bossy, especially with the younger staff. She means well, though, and Nicol has been able to show viewers that along with other facets of her character.

"What's brilliant about (series creator/executive producer/writer) Julian Fellowes is that he gives you one aspect of a character, and then because of circumstances you see another side," says the actress. "So when, for instance, we find out about Mrs. Patmore's nephew, who was apparently shot for cowardice (in the military), that opens up a whole other seam of her life and reveals a very vulnerable woman.

"Although I can't speak in detail, I can say that in season three, you'll see much more of Mrs. Patmore and Mrs. Hughes (Phyllis Logan) banding together rather than opposed to each other, which was also wonderful to investigate."

With Downtown Abbey renewed for a fourth season, Nicol will once again be reprising her role of Mrs. Patmore, and that suits her just fine. "It's a lovely job and I feel very blessed to be in it," she enthuses. **DOWNTON ABBEY SEASON THREE PREMIERES JAN. 6 ON MASTERPIECE ON PBS. ALL THREE SEASONS BEGIN AIRING ON VISIONTV ON JAN. 2 AT 9 P.M. ET/6 P.M. PT**

Lesley Nicol plays Mrs. Beryl Patmore, Downton's sometimes bossy cook.
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Maintaining the voice that has maintained his career

Italian tenor. Andrea Bocelli talks about his new album, ignoring the luxury items in life and his belief in the goodness of people

AMANDA QUEIRÓS
Metro World News

The Italian tenor who gave a pop touch to classical music confesses his love for opera, soccer and good food and explains how he keeps his voice and his popularity worldwide

At the age of 54, the Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli reaps impressive numbers for an opera singer. He has sold more than 70 million records worldwide in a 20-year-old career. On Jan. 29, he releases Passione, in which he sings in six languages and shares duets with Jennifer Lopez and Nelly Furtado. The voice of the hit Time to Say Goodbye spoke to Metro about the mix between popular and classic music that made him famous across the world.

Why have you decided to merge classical and popular music?
Actually, I try to split them up. Classical music and pop are two different universes, each with its own difficulties, peculiarities, depth and artistic dignity. Of course, in presentations in arenas, I try to sing classical music to propagate it better. I do not really like the term crossover. I also have no need to label what I do.

What are the sacrifices demanded by your career?
The most difficult in my profession has always been the separation of those who I love. In regards to that, I especially think about my parents and how brave they were to teach me how to be brave by sending me to study far from home when I was still a boy so I could have a better life later.

How do you preserve your voice?
I never stop trying to perfect the technique. This lesson I learned from my friend and great tenor Luciano Pavarotti. He taught me to sing effortlessly and give the best of myself — something essential, or otherwise there would be no more singing at my age. I follow a strict diet before tours and opera seasons, having an almost monastic life, forgetting wine, coffee, pasta and other important joys of life. The opera singer in general is a gourmand and refuses to be limited — and I'm no exception. But one problem is the reflux, almost a "working disease" of singers, which requires me to be more careful at the table.

What is the most unusual presentation you've ever done?
I did concerts around the world, surrounded by places such as Central Park or the pyramids of Egypt. But I like to remember an episode that happened this year, when Italy beat Germany in Euro Cup. Everyone came out to the street and I was also in the middle of that mess, standing on the seat of my electric car, with the Italian flag in my right hand, singing in a deafening way Fratelli d'Italia (the Italian anthem). I was very happy to be there. Everyone has the right to spend a little of what is left of their youthful heart.

With 70 million records sold, how do you deal with piracy?
This is the result of a 20-year career. And in the 1990s, the problem of illegal copying was not as big as it is today. Perhaps without piracy, this number would be higher. I am an incurable optimist, I believe in the honesty of others. I think that those who loves my music and have resources to buy albums or download them legally will do it. The CD is still a way for me to get into people's homes and have the honor of being part of the soundtrack of their existence.

Andrea Bocelli credits his vocal success to cutting out the luxurious things in life. GETTY IMAGES

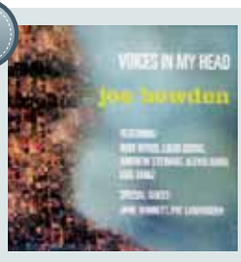
Quoted

"I am an incurable optimist, I believe in the honesty of others."

Andrea Bocelli
Speaking about how he trusts that those who love his music and have the ability to purchase will continue to do so out of the goodness of their hearts.

CD Pick

Listen to the Voices in My Head



Looking for a great gift for that jazz lover on your list? If so, Joe 'Jojo' Bowden's newly-released debut recording, Voices In My Head, is perfect. Combining the hard edge of jazz improvisation with the solid backbeat of rhythm and blues and featuring all original music, Voices In My Head highlights Joe's intimate understanding of synchronicity, musicality and versatility. For a sneak peak, visit metronews.ca/scene. METRO

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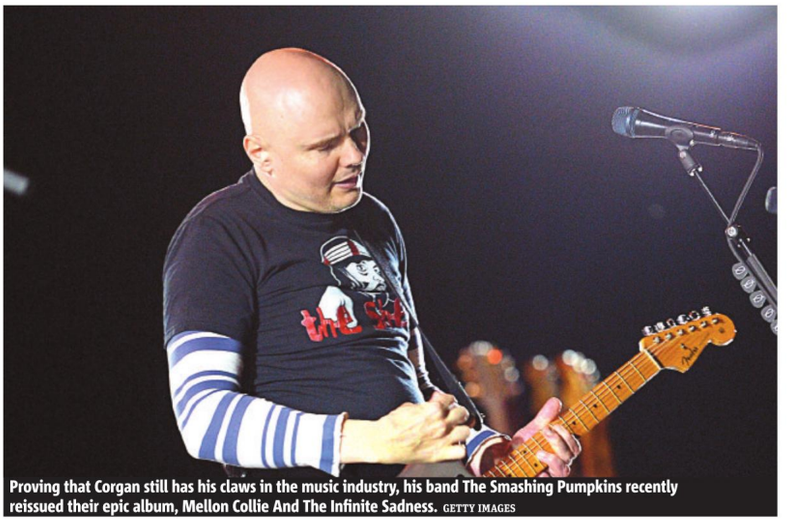


Proving that Corgan still has his claws in the music industry, his band The Smashing Pumpkins recently reissued their epic album, Mellon Collie And The Infinite Sadness. GETTY IMAGES

Let's get ready to rock and rumble

Smashing Pumpkins to smashing heads.

Billy Corgan finding success as wrestling promoter

Billy Corgan had a night off from the latest Smashing Pumpkins tour and a night out with The Blue Meanie.

No, that's not the next up-and-coming band with a colourful name, along the lines of the White Stripes or the Black Keys.

The Blue Meanie is a professional wrestler — yes, hair and beard dyed cobalt blue to match his worn T-shirt — and Corgan was his tag-team partner for a Friday night road trip to an independent wrestling show in New Jersey.

His next Smashing Pumpkins concert was a night away, and Corgan wasn't going to miss it.

The musician-songwriter is more than just another celebrity immersed in wrestling as some sort of quirky promotional stunt.

Corgan's childhood fandom of the high-flying moves and outlandish story lines morphed into a serious passion for the craft and real-life drama that goes with it.

For the past year, the Smashing Pumpkins' frontman has worked as the behind-the-scenes brainchild for the Resistance Pro Wrestling promotion out of Illinois. He teamed with R-Pro owners, brothers Gabe and Jacques Baron, to raise the diminished expectations that usually come with a typical weekend indie show and make the company a smashing success over the first 10 cards.

Stretched out in a Philadelphia hotel room, Corgan explained he's in the wrestling business for the long haul.

"I like that it makes people uncomfortable," Corgan said. "I like that it's not an easy thing to explain. I like when it's great, it's amazing; when it's bad, it's really, really bad."

Corgan's music career has pretty much been all great since he founded the seminal 1990s alternative-rock band that keeps churning out acclaimed records, like their latest, Oceania," even as they endured a breakup, lawsuits, and multiple lineup changes.

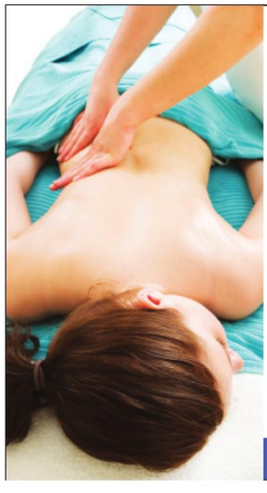
He shifted his talents to R-Pro as the creative director, where he consults with wrestlers and maps out old-school story lines with a modern twist to keep the promotion strong.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Music and the mat

The entertainment industry has long tried to wrest its way into the wrestling world.

- Mr. T and Lawrence Taylor main evented WWE cards.
- Aretha Franklin, Kid Rock and John Legend have all performed at WrestleMania.



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When the tunes brought us together

A social song.
Beck harkens back to a time when music bonded the masses

Beck spent six months finishing off his project, The Song Reader, after working on it sporadically for years. KIM D. JOHNSON / THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Beck Hansen wants you to think about the way music has changed over the last century, and what that means about how human beings engage each other these days.

Labouring over the intricate and ornate details of his new Song Reader sheet music project, he was struck by how social music used to be — something we've lost in the age of ear buds.

"You watch an old film and see how people would dance together in the '20s, '30s and '40s. You'd go out and people would switch partners and it was a way of social interaction," Hansen said. "It's something that was part of what brought people together. Playing music in the home is another aspect of that that's been lost. Again, I'm not on a campaign to get people to take up songs and play music in their home or anything. But it is interesting to me, the loss of that, what it means."

Beck hopes the Song Reader inspires some of us to pick up instruments and limber our vocal cords. It includes 20 songs annotated on sheet music that's been decorated in the style popular in the early 20th century when the songwriting industry was a thriving enterprise with billions of songs sold.

The 42-year-old singer notes in the book's preface that Bing Crosby's Sweet Leilani sold an estimated 54 million copies in 1937, meaning about 40 per cent or more of the U.S. population was engaged in learning how to play that song.

Take note

...When I think of my great-grandparents' generations, music defined their lives in a different way than it does now."
Beck Hansen

They were touching it directly, speeding it up, slowing it down, changing the lyrics and creating something new.

"There's popular bands now that people know the words to their songs and can sing along, but there's something about playing a song for yourself or for your friends and family that allows you to inhabit the song and by some sort of osmosis it becomes part of who you are in a way," he said. "So when I think of my great-grandparents' generations, music defined their lives in a different way than it does now."

Beck proposed the idea to McSweeney's Dave Eggers in 2004 and it soon blossomed into something more ambitious as the artist wrapped his mind around the challenge of not just writing a song, but presenting it in a classic way that also engages fans who might not be able to read music or play their own instruments.

They quickly agreed it would make no money, but it seemed like an idea worth exploring.

"And it seemed like only Beck would have thought of it," Eggers said in an email to the Associated Press. "It's a very generous project, in that he wrote a bunch of songs and just gives them to the world to interpret. That's a very expansive kind of generosity and inclusiveness that we're happy to be part of. On a formal level, we love projects like this, that are unprecedented, and that result in a beautiful object full of great art and great writing. And it all started with Beck. It's a testament to his groundbreaking approach to everything he does."

Beck hopes fans will record their own versions and upload them to the Internet so those songs grow into something more universal.

As for his own recorded music, that's a little more complicated.

Beck's not sure where he's headed at the moment. He recorded an album in 2008, but set it aside to work with Charlotte Gainsbourg on IRM, which he wrote and produced. He's also been writing songs for soundtracks and special projects and producing artists like Thurston Moore, Stephen Malkmus and Dwight Yoakam. All that has left him feeling creatively satisfied, but he does acknowledge it's been a while since he released 2008's Danger Mouse-produced Modern Guilt.

He says in many ways he's reached a crossroads he's not yet sure how to navigate.

"This last year I've been thinking about whether I'd finish those songs (from 2008), whether they're relevant or worthy of releasing. I know that doesn't sound very definitive," he said, laughing, "but that's the kind of place I'm in — in this kind of limbo — and, um, yeah."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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The hardest working man in music

David Guetta. Today's most popular DJ talks about the benefits and drawbacks of the Internet and gives us his ultimate playlist

RICHARD PECKETT
Metro World News

Call him popular, or today's 'it' feature guy, but however you say it, David Guetta is in high demand. HANDOUT

David Guetta, one of the most worked with musicians today, spoke to Metro about working with Will.i.am, the social networking revolution and who are the most talented DJs of today.

How would you describe your relationship with Will.i.am?
He's a friend. We've known each other since I produced I Gotta Feeling and anything that he comes out with is always genius, so I kind of trust him with closed eyes.

What's he like to work with?
He's like a bit of a crazy scientist who has difficulty in only doing one thing at a time.

We just open the mics up and he doesn't write anything — it just comes out of him — and it's impressive to see that. He's a party guy and that's my life.

What do you think of the i.am+ and social networking?
You know, I started organizing raves when I was very young and it was against the law.

Radio and TV were not playing our music in France and the only way to have events and DJ was to keep tight with the people who were from the scene. It was text messages, phone numbers, flyers, stuff like this, you know. So now of course with technology, it's evolving, but it's the same principle, only it's not just my city, but the world. Literally anything that allows me to share my passion and get closer to the fans is great.

So you think that the Internet and YouTube are a positive for the industry?
Amazing, absolutely. It's made music so democratic because it's cheap to produce music to a professional quality and you can also market it through a laptop. Nowadays, it's about creativity, the music itself and it's not like the head of the record company, the head of a TV channel and the head of a radio channel are going to sit down over lunch and decide who's the next star.

Do you think that there are more talented DJs today?
I don't think that there are more talented people around now but there are more opportunities for them to expose their ability. Talent is about continual good ideas and a career. It's way more competitive. Everything is so fast. It's easier to rise and also quicker to fall.

You played to 3 million people last year on Copacabana Beach in Rio de Janeiro. Do you prefer bigger venues?
Not necessarily, I love both. I really love playing Pacha in Ibiza, but now those kind of venues are a little small for me. This New Year, I'm going to play Mamita's Beach, Playa del Carmen in Mexico, which isn't as big but I love Latin and South America.

David Guetta's ultimate NYE playlist

1. **David Guetta ft Taped Rai.** Just One Last Time (Extended Mix) (What A Music)
2. **Ludacris ft Usher & David Guetta.** Rest Of My Life (Extended Mix Edit) (Def Jam)
3. **Rihanna ft David Guetta.** Right Now (Def Jam)
4. **Alesso.** Clash (Refune)
5. **David Guetta & Nicky Romero.** Metropolis (Jack Back)
6. **Thomas Gold.** MIAO (Fly Eye)
7. **Daddy's Groove.** Turn The Lights Down (David Guetta Re-Work) (Jack Back)
8. **Chuckie & Junxterjack.** Make Some Noise (Cr2/Big Beat)
9. **Tony Romera.** Pandor (Protocol)
10. **David Guetta ft Ne-Yo & Akon.** Play Hard (Edit) (What A Music)

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Have yourself a merry little (and slightly odd) Christmas

SOUND CHECK
Alan Cross
scene@metronews.ca

Assuming the world doesn't end, we're still scheduled to have Christmas. Here are three more holiday songs that are a little out of the ordinary

We Three Kings/Cai.ro

An interesting orchestral version the carol based on everyone's 10th century Duke of Bohemia. Good for Fleet Foxes fans.

The 12 Days of Christmas/Chris Murray

From A Moose in a Maple Tree, which also includes tracks from Tegan & Sara and Johnny Bower. Yes, him.

A MOOSE IN A MAPLE TREE
THE ALL-CANADIAN 12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS
performed by CHRIS MURRAY

Santa's Doing the Horizontal Twist/Kay Martin and the Body Guards

A risqué Vegas nightclub act released this on their 1962 album, I Know What He Wants for Christmas…But I Don't' Know How to Wrap It!

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METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

Kristen Stewart and Robert Pattinson

Stewart and Pattinson host Christmas party

Kristen Stewart and Robert Pattinson are reportedly getting pretty domestic, even going so far as to host a small Christmas party for their friends, according to Hollywood Life. "Kristen and Rob had a small, intimate Christmas tree decorating party on Sunday. They have a gorgeous tree set up at Kristen's, where Rob pretty much lives now," a source says. "They are not living with each other, but they are spending plenty of time with each other and they do sleep over often. They are in a really magical place right now despite some lingering trust issues on Rob's side."

The Word

Odd couples of 2012

THE WORD
Dorothy Robinson
scene@metronews.ca

Rosario Dawson and Danny Boyle
A 22-year age difference hasn't stopped director Danny Boyle and actress Rosario Dawson from "canoodling" all over London, per the brilliant and descriptive London press. The May/December romance apparently bloomed on the set of their new movie Trance. Was it the Olympics' bizarre opening ceremony that took Dawson's heart?

Simon Cowell and Carmen Electra
The rumours are kind of true: "She's not my girlfriend," Cowell, 53, explained when he called in to On Air with Ryan Seacrest yesterday about the rumours between the two stars. "We're people who date." How very "bro" of you, Simon.

Avril Lavigne and Chad Kroeger
To the surprise of most, the singers got engaged this year after quietly dating for six months, Lavigne's rep confirmed to People magazine. "A romantic relationship blossomed as they spent time writing together," the rep says. This will be the Canadian singer's second marriage after splitting from Sum 41 frontman Deryck Whibley in 2009. Kroeger "makes her so happy," a source tells the magazine. "Both of their families could not be more excited."

Johnny Depp

She's just not that into you

Newly single Johnny Depp is reportedly hung up on his Rum Diary co-star, Amber Heard.

The only problem is the feeling isn't exactly mutual, according to Radar Online. "Johnny and Amber have been having a lot of fun spending time with one another, but Amber keeps telling him she's not interested in being with him in a monogamous relationship," a source says.

"She says she feels she's too young for him, but the main factor is Amber prefers dating women over men and has no interest in committing to a guy — even if he is Johnny Depp."

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CONTACT– Raj Sherman, Laurie Blakeman, David Swann, Darshan Kang or Kent Hehr at:
liberal.correspondence@assembly.ab.ca

Claire Danes

Danes welcomes baby

Homeland star Claire Danes and husband Hugh Dancy welcomed their first child, a son, this week, her rep confirms to People magazine. Cyrus Christopher Dancy was born Monday "exactly at 3 p.m.," Dancy reportedly told friends and family in an email, according to Page Six. "Mother and baby are well, healthy and happy." Danes and Dancy first met filming Evening in 2006 and married in 2009.

2012 YEAR END COUNTDOWN

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December

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

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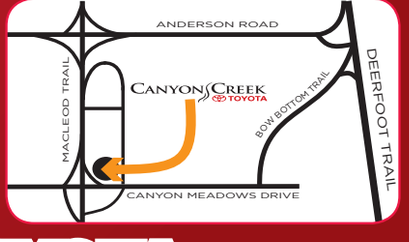

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Santa's cookies 2.0

Chocolate Shortbread Melt-Aways

This recipe makes five dozen small cookies. DAN CLAPSON

These cookies have a chocolate intensity that balances with their buttery richness, and when piped onto a baking tray, they look like chocolate kisses. They are a good addition to a holiday cookie tin.

- 1 cup (250 ml) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 1 cup (250 ml) icing sugar, sifted
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) vanilla extract
- 1 1/2 cups (375 ml) all-purpose flour
- 1/3 cup (80 ml) Dutch process cocoa powder, sifted
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) cornstarch
- 1/2 tsp (2 ml salt)

1. Preheat the oven to 325 F (160 C) and line 2 baking trays with parchment paper.

2. Cream the butter and icing sugar together until smooth. Beat in the vanilla extract.

3. Add the flour, cocoa, cornstarch, and salt, and beat until evenly incorporated.

4. Spoon the soft cookie dough into a piping bag fitted with a large plain tip, and pipe 1-inch (2.5 cm) "kisses" onto the baking trays, leaving a 2-inch (5 cm) space between the cookies.

5. Bake the cookies for 12 to 14 minutes, until they lift away from the parchment paper without sticking. Let the cookies cool completely on the tray before removing. The cookies will keep in an airtight container for up to 3 days. **FROM ANNA OLSON'S BACK TO BAKING**

Holiday baking. As the undisputed queen of sweets, Anna Olson knows a thing or two about delicious treats

DAN CLAPSON
life@metronews.ca

Whether it's gingerbread, yule logs or some shortbread, with the holiday season comes the sweet smell of desserts in the air.

Food Network personality Anna Olson took some time out of her busy baking schedule to chat about what she's whipping up for the holidays. And, no surprise, she is as sweet as sugar!

What's the first memory you have of baking over the holidays?
Making Cherry Walnut Icebox cookies with my grandma.

I still make these cookies each year. It's not Christmas without them.

Do you and your family have any Christmas traditions when it comes to the baking?
My mom and I book a day each year to bake our family recipes as well as make perogies.

Then we go out for dinner to toast our accomplishment — and so we don't have to do any more dishes!

Fruitcake always gets a bad rap. Where do people go wrong with it?
I think people don't think you can alter the fruit and nut combination, but you have a great deal of flexibility.

So long as the total measurement of fruit and nuts is the same, feel free to switch out the candied peel for dried cherries or cranberries, or replace the prunes with figs!

Anna Olson. SUBMITTED

Any tips to ensure a sturdy gingerbread house that will stand the test of time and also small hands picking candy off of it?
For a gingerbread house that needs to remain intact for more than a week, then it really shouldn't be made to be eaten. In this case, use vegetable shortening instead of butter in the cookie dough. For an icing that holds up well, use a recipe that calls for meringue powder. It sets up firmly but it's also easy to work with when soft.

A Christmas cookie can take many shapes and forms. What is your go-to variety?
Other than my Grandma's Cherry Walnut cookies, I must have my Toblerone Shortbread onhand the entire month of December.

Your love for baking and sweets is undeniable, but is there one thing you don't like to whip up in your kitchen?
I've never really clicked with rum balls. I always pass them over if they are on a cookie platter and I don't make them at home.

Last, but perhaps most important, do you leave milk and cookies out for Santa on Christmas Eve?
You bet! I need to stay on the nice list!

Liquid Assets

White wines for zombies with Santa hats?

LIQUID ASSETS
Peter Rockwell
@therealwineguy
liquidassets@eastlink.ca

I write this column assuming the world hasn't ended today. If I'm wrong, here are some red wine suggestions to match with turkey for all you roaming hordes of zombies who may or may not have taken over the earth.

One of the wine world's most heinous old wives' tales is that white wines only go with white meats and red wines only go with red meats. If something has to end today, please let it be that thick slice of baloney.

You have to think about more than the star of the meal when it comes to a liquid pairing. Considering all the side dishes means a meal featuring the grand gobbler can cast a wide net catching many red wines.

For some outside the box drinking, think a mid-priced Italian Chianti, a robust Rioja from Spain or a fresh flavoured merlot from California, Australia or Chile.

As a long time pinot-file, I tend to crave a fruit-forward pinot noir when carving. New Zealand knows its way around the grape and the 2011 Oyster Bay Pinot Noir ($19.95 - $24.99) oozes ample very berry fruit that should appeal to all of your table mates, whether alive ... or living dead.

Happy holidays!

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Julian Brass, Founder of notable.ca, Canada's online source for young professionals

The End of the World Music Festival

This one-day event celebrates the diverse musical community of Calgary. Taking place at the Legion No. 1 (116 7 Ave. SE), Friday at 7 p.m., the premise is if Calgary's musicians had only one last show on earth, what would they play? For one evening, Calgary's musical community will come together and play "their last show." Showcasing bands from multiple genres, the only curated aspect will be the band lineup.

Nutcracker warms up the season

For many, this is where a lifelong love of dance begins. Hitting the Jubilee stage (1415 14 Ave. NW), this festive classic combines Edmund Stripe's breathtaking choreography, Tchaikovsky's perfect score and the brilliance of Emmy-winning designer Zack Brown to create a stunning, opulent world you will return to again and again. Even after a hundred years, this epic battle of mice, toy soldiers, a Russian princess and the Sugar Plum Fairy still draws rave reviews. (Through Christmas Eve).

3rd Annual Christmas Special

The Dudes present their 3rd Annual Christmas Special at REPUBLIK (219 17th Ave. SW), featuring The Dudes with Cowpuncher and Falcon. This has become a beloved local holiday tradition. This year's Christmas Special brings festive ensembles, perhaps a Santa or two, glorious decorations and a night full of joyous rock n' roll. (8 p.m., Sunday).

The Fifth Reel presents: GREMLINS (Ugly Christmas Sweater Party)

Though not your average Christmas movie, Gremlins is a must see classic. Screening at The Plaza Theatre (1133 Kensington Rd. NW), you can enjoy a rum and eggnog while you watch the movie. Show up early to enjoy a performance by local folk punk heroes JENNY. Don't forget to don your best ugly Christmas sweater — you'll receive an epic Christmas gift from Santa's goodie bag. (10 p.m., Saturday).

3rd Annual BT's Christmas Ball

The 3rd Annual BT'S Christmas Ball is back at Ironwood (1229 9 Ave SE), and this year it's going to be amazing! Hear all the hearts beating in rhythm and giving thanks for another year of living! Ari Neufeld (all the way from BC) will open the show. Then the Big Love Family Band hits the stage for a jam with Brent Tyler (BT), Jory Kinjo sitting in on bass, and Aaron Young on guitar. (8 p.m., Sunday).

Funnyfest Christmas Comedy Show

Ready for some laughable holiday cheer? Catch the show at The Libertine (221 8 Ave. SW) featuring three Funnyfest favourite comics, as well as the always original and over-the-top Stu Hughes. Laugh, enjoy great food with friends and, of course, get your photo taken with Santa Clause. It's gonna be a hoot! (Saturday)

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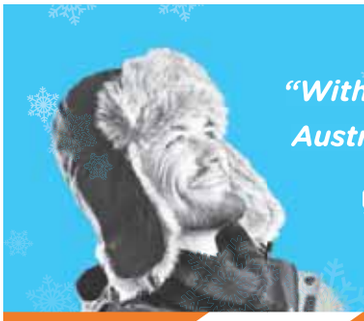

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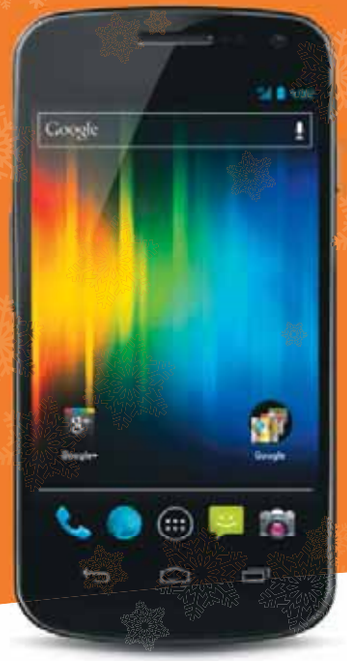

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HOLIDAY 2012 gift guide

Tap into these tech gifts

Buzz about smartphones

iPhone 5 — $699 and up (without contract).

Samsung Galaxy Note 2 — $729 (without contract).

MIKE YAWNEY
For Metro

With processors and features that rival small computers, it's no wonder smartphones have quickly become the high tech gift for the holidays. There are many smartphones to choose from, but which one is right for your loved one? Take a look at our picks to find the perfect one.

iPhone 5 — $699 and up (without contract)
Featuring an all new design, Apple's latest smartphone is sure to turn heads. The diamond-cut bevelled edges not only look beautiful, they take away the rough edges, giving it an elegant feel. This is the first iPhone to feature LTE, which means you can take advantage of the latest high-speed wireless networks. The Retina display has also been made slightly larger so you get more usable workspace on the screen.

Samsung Galaxy Note 2 — $729 (without contract)
An ideal smartphone for those in marketing, advertising or someone with a creative flair. Often referred to as a smartphone/tablet hybrid, the Note II features a large 5.5-inch screen that can be navigated through touch or a special stylus known as an S Pen. Users can use the pen to sketch or draw on maps, photos or blueprints. The blazing quad-core processor gives this phone performance like no other.

Nokia Lumia 920 — $549.99 (without contract)
The most advanced Windows phone to date. Sporting wireless charging and a touchscreen so sensitive you can use it while wearing gloves, the Nokia 920 is sure to be a popular phone this holiday. The 8.7-megapixel camera also shoots surprisingly well in low light conditions.

LG Optimus G — $599 (without contract)
This smartphone has received the title of "Canada's fastest smartphone." Not only is it the first handset to feature Qualcomm's lightning-quick quad-core processor, it's also the first phone to support the 2,600 MHz spectrum, which is the fastest LTE network in the country. The Optimus G also features a voice-activated camera that will snap photos whenever someone says the word "cheese."

Sony Xperia T — $549 (no contract, price may vary)
Known simply as "The Bond Phone," the Xperia T is the same smartphone used by 007 himself in Skyfall. This handset features a 13-megapixel camera and is Playstation certified, which is perfect for those who enjoy gaming on the go. Music and photos can easily be shared by bringing this smartphone close to other NFC-enabled devices.

Mophie Powerstation Pro — $99
Smartphones are simply paperweights without a fully charged battery. Fortunately, this device will ensure your battery lasts all day and then some. The Powerstation Pro holds enough juice to recharge your smartphone up to four times. It's lightweight, rugged, dust-proof and waterproof so it's perfect for those constantly on the go.

Ballistic Cases — various prices
You spent a fortune on your new smartphone, so why not protect your investment. Ballistic cases are designed to do just that. Ballistic cases have been tested to withstand drops, being run over by vehicles, and Fido's canine teeth. Note: Not a good idea to let your dog use your smartphone as a chew toy.

Clockwise, from left, Nokia Lumia 920 — $549.99 (without contract), Sony Xperia T — $549 (no contract, price may vary), LG Optimus G — $599 (without contract), Ballistic Cases — various prices, Mophie Powerstation Pro — $99.

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Challenge yourself this year by finding different ways to gift wrap your Christmast presents. JUPITERIMAGES/COMSTOCK/THINKSTOCK

Get crafty with gift wrapping

SARAH GUNN
YummyMummyClub.ca

Wrapping presents is one of my favourite things to do this time of year. I love the patterns of paper, the ribbons and the bows.

This year, though, I wanted to get a little crafty with my Christmas wrapping so I challenged myself to come up with three different ways to use brown paper.

I discovered that brown paper packages don't just have to be tied up with string — they can be decorated with almost anything. (Yes, The Sound of Music is my favourite movie of all time).

I mostly used things around the house, but if you don't have a basement full of craft supplies, you can get everything you need at any craft store.

Use craft paint to create a holiday theme. YUMMY MUMMY PHOTO

Try ribbon, scrapbook paper and stickers for decoration. YUMMY MUMMY PHOTO

Wrap your package in a band of felt and add details. YUMMY MUMMY PHOTO

- Paint your packages in a holiday theme using craft paint.
- Use ribbon, scrapbook paper, and stickers for another look.
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Recipe. Mulled Cider Shortbread Bars

Try these delicious cider shortbread bars for guests or the family during the holidays.

Ingredients:

Crust:

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- ¾ cup cold Gay Lea Unsalted Butter, cut into cubes
- ½ cup instant dissolving sugar
- ½ tsp salt

Filling:

- 6 egg yolks
- 2 cups instant dissolving sugar
- ⅓ cup all-purpose flour
- 1½ cups apple cider
- 2 tsp finely grated orange zest
- 2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp ground nutmeg
- 2 tbsp icing sugar

Instructions:

1 Crust: Preheat the oven to 350 F (180 C). Combine the flour, butter, sugar and salt in a food processor; pulse until crumbly. Firmly press the dough into a 9x13-inch baking pan lined with foil. Bake for 25 minutes or until pale golden around the edges.

2 Filling: Meanwhile, whisk the egg yolks with the sugar and flour until a very thick paste forms. Whisk in the apple cider, orange zest, cinnamon, baking powder and nutmeg until smooth.

3 Reduce the oven temperature to 300 F (150 C). Pour the egg mixture over the hot crust. Bake for 45 to 50 minutes or until just set. Cool to room temperature. Chill for at least 4 hours or until firm. Dust the top with the icing sugar and slice into bars. Makes 32 bars

Tips:

1 Make-ahead: Transfer the bars to an airtight container and store, in the refrigerator, for up to 4 days or in the freezer for up to 1 month.

2 Ingredient source: If apple cider isn't available at the supermarket, use any cold-pressed apple juice.

RECIPE COURTESY GAY LEA FOODS CO-OPERATIVE LTD.

These Mulled Cider Shortbread Bars can be made in advance and stored in the refrigerator for four days. GAY LEA PHOTO

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World juniors

'Discipline is the subplot' in Canada's loss in Finland

It was an early wake-up call for Canada's world junior team. Undisciplined and out of sorts, the Canadians dropped an exhibition game to host Finland 3-2 on Thursday. Two of the Finnish goals were scored with a 5-on-3 power play during a game that saw Canada assessed nine minor penalties in total.

"I think the challenge for us, obviously, is coming together as a team," Canadian coach Steve Spott said. "It's our first game. But ultimately I think discipline is the subplot here tonight, where we have to get used to the standard of officiating and deal with our discipline a lot smarter than we did tonight."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Lockout

Season closer to cancellation with more games axed

The NHL has moved one step closer to calling off another season because of a labour dispute.

Regular-season games through Jan. 14 were wiped off the schedule on Thursday afternoon, setting up a potential timeline for the league's collective bargaining negotiations with the NHL Players' Association.

It was likely the final batch of games that will be cancelled if commissioner Gary Bettman holds true to his word that the league must play at least a 48-game schedule with playoffs ending in June. The next announcement from the league will be either a new CBA or a second cancelled season in eight years.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Nathan MacKinnon, from Sidney Crosby's hometown of Cole Harbour, N.S., is living his dream overseas with a spot on Canada's world junior roster. The youngest player on Team Canada is considered a possible No. 1 pick in the 2013 NHL draft. JEFF MCINTOSH/THE CANADIAN PRESS

MacKinnon dreaming of gold this Christmas

World juniors. Highly touted 17-year-old living dream with chance for glory with Team Canada

PHILIP CROUCHER
Metro in Halifax

Nathan MacKinnon will wake up on Christmas morning far from the comforts of home.

He'll open his eyes in a Russian hotel room next to a teammate who, like him, is spending the holidays thousands of miles from the family gatherings and traditions he's come to love.

Still, there is no place MacKinnon would rather be this holiday season. That's because the 17-year-old Cole Harbour, N.S., standout with the Halifax Mooseheads is fulfilling a dream — one shared by most teenagers who lace up their skates — to play for Canada at the world junior hockey championships.

"It's different, but I'm doing something that I love. I'm having a lot of fun," he said on Thursday by phone, after playing in Canada's first exhibition game, a 3-2 loss to Finland. "It would be nice to be home for Christmas, but this is an excellent thing."

MacKinnon, who doesn't turn 18 until September, is the youngest member of Team Canada, but goes into the tournament with plenty of expectations.

A possible first overall pick in next year's NHL draft, MacKinnon will be looked upon to play an important role among 18- and 19-year-olds.

Quoted

"It was a cool experience — a world junior game — it was exciting. And I'm sure every game is going to get more and more exciting."

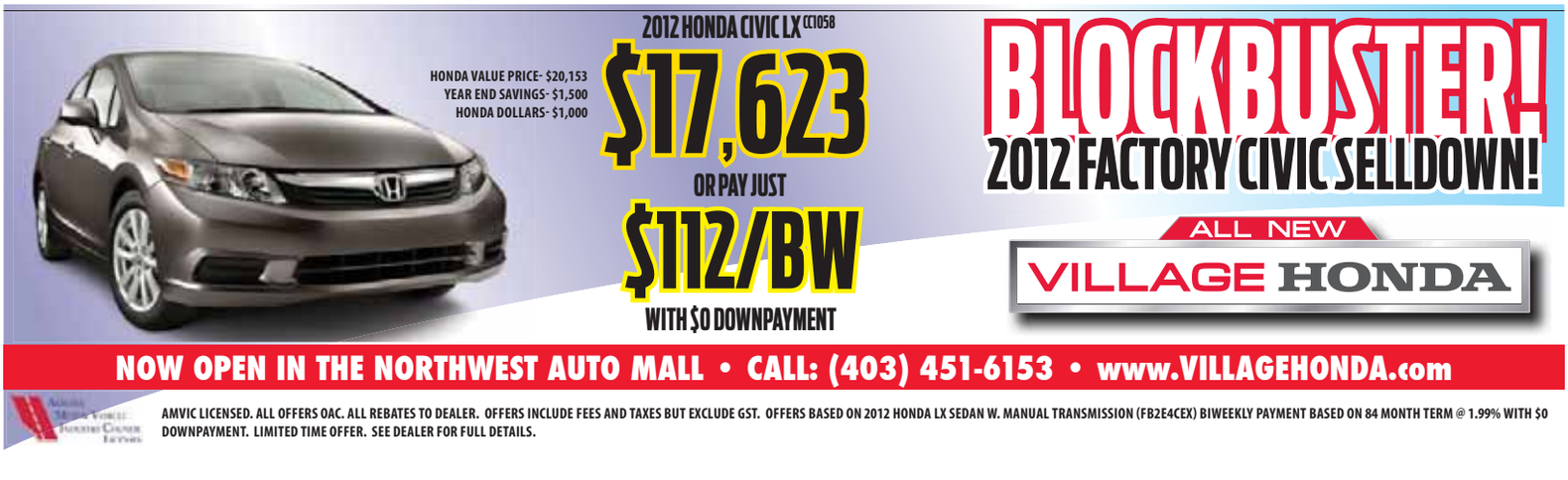
Nathan MacKinnon, on playing for Team Canada in a 3-2 exhibition loss to Finland on Thursday

Whatever that role turns out to be, MacKinnon is ready to accept it. With the Mooseheads, he's on the No. 1 line and getting plenty of power-play time. With Team Canada, he could be used as a 13th forward and get the odd shift on special teams.

"I want to help the team and I want to be an impact player," said MacKinnon, who sits third in Quebec Major Junior Hockey League scoring with 22 goals and 30 assists in 30 games. "But I'm going to do whatever role I'm given and hopefully the team can be successful."

MacKinnon is the first Nova Scotian to play at the world juniors for Canada since 2007 and 2008, when Brad Marchand of Hammonds Plains cracked the team.

4 SPORTS



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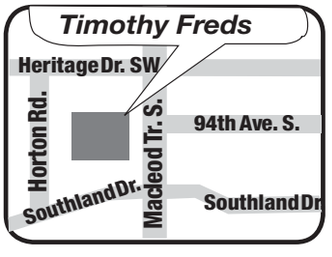

Christine Nesbitt competes in the 1,000-metre race on Nov. 18, the final day of the Essent ISU World Cup Speed Skating at Thialf Ice Stadium in Heerenveen, Netherlands. DEAN MOUH/GETTY IMAGES

Nesbitt's quest for perfection

Fire on ice. Despite a world record and slew of medals in 2012, Calgary-based speedskater strives for the unattainable

Insight into what makes Christine Nesbitt such a superb athlete can be gleaned from her views on how she closed out her remarkable 2012.

The 27-year-old speedskater from London, Ont., who began the year by smashing the world record in the 1,000 metres in January and winning the 1,000 metres and 1,500 metres on consecutive days at the world single distance championships in March, had a dominant fall, grabbing seven medals — four gold, one silver, two bronze — in four World Cup events.

It all added up to her being shortlisted for the Lou Marsh Award as Canada's athlete of the year, which went to soccer star Christine Sinclair. But it's far from enough for Nesbitt.

"I'm not very happy how I raced this fall," she said this week in an interview from her home in Calgary. "I don't feel like I had an excellent race."

To be an Olympian and a world champion obviously requires tremendous dedication, commitment and mental toughness to go with athletic ability.

Nesbitt takes it to another level. The 2010 gold medallist at the Vancouver Olympics not only wants to win every competition she enters, she's also motivated by a quest for something she admits is impossible — perfection.

"The problem is you're always trying to achieve something that is, essentially, unattainable," Nesbitt said of her goal to produce a flawless race.

Nesbitt thought she'd done it last January at the Olympic Oval in Calgary.

Angered by her skate in the 500 metres earlier that day, she tore over the 1,000-metre course in one minute, 12.68 seconds, shaving nearly a half-second off the world mark set by teammate Cindy Klassen in 2006 on the same ice.

"At the time, I didn't know how I could get better," Nesbitt said this week. "But this summer, I watched it again and saw mistakes, or at least things that I could do better."

While some might call this a curse, Nesbitt and her coaches see it as one of her strengths, something that gives her an edge going into the Olympics in Sochi in 14 months. If there weren't something to strive for, there would be complacency, and that is one of the biggest enemies of the elite athlete.

"It is a bit surprising to hear an athlete be frustrated with their performance when they're consistently on the podium," said Mark Wild, who co-coaches Nesbitt along with Xiuli Wang. "But that's one of her assets as an athlete.

"She's certainly intense and she expects a lot out of herself."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

The need for speed

And it all began on a hockey rink

Speedskater Christine Nesbitt's first experience on blades was playing minor hockey before she moved on to short-track speedskating at age 12 and long-track at 18.

She likes each event for different reasons, calling it "a toss-up" for her favourite.

Nesbitt likes the 1,000 metres because it's "fun" to go so fast.

"I've never driven a car really fast, but I think it must be the same feeling, except I'm generating that speed myself," she said. "It's pretty amazing."

By contrast, Nesbitt calls the 1,500 metres "excruciatingly painful," but with a great sense of satisfaction after a good race, unlike any other distance.

Coach Mark Wild said Nesbitt's love of the sport is reflected in the work she puts into it. In addition to intense skating workouts, she endures long bike rides in the summer heat to build endurance and lifts heavy weights for strength.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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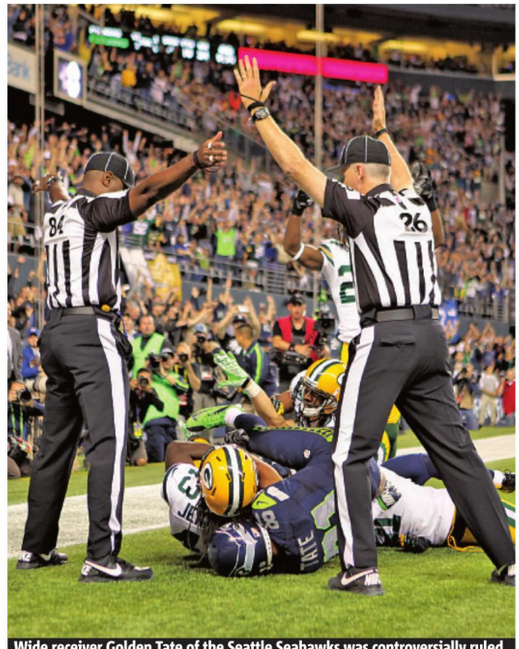
Blown-call fallout being felt with playoffs on line

NFL. Seahawks can help Packers get No. 2 spot and a bye with win over 49ers



Wide receiver Golden Tate of the Seattle Seahawks was controversially ruled to have caught a touchdown pass to defeat the Green Bay Packers on Sept. 24 in Seattle. GREULE JR/GETTY IMAGES

Pay up, Seahawks.

The Green Bay Packers have put the Inaccurate Reception behind them, and they've done their best not to begrudge Seattle for the win that really wasn't. But karma has a way of coming back around, and the Seahawks have a chance to make things right this weekend.

"Without looking in the past, we have to root for a team we fell short to," Packers linebacker Clay Matthews said on Thursday. "So that's how it goes. We'll control our own destiny by winning these out and hopefully we can get some help along the way."

San Francisco (10-3-1) is a game ahead of Green Bay (10-4) for the NFC's No. 2 seed and Seattle plays the 49ers on Sunday night. Beat the Niners and the Seahawks can essentially get the Packers back to where they would have been had replacement referees not blown that call back in September.

Which means that, providing they beat Tennessee on Sunday afternoon, the Packers will be rooting for the Seahawks.

"I don't know if they owe us anything — not them, in particular," Matthews said.

But if the Seahawks want to wipe the karmic slate clean, who are the Packers to argue?

"We want home field," James Jones said, "so hopefully they get it done." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The fail mary

The Inaccurate Reception was arguably the worst call of the NFL season.

- Green Bay safety M.D. Jennings appeared to intercept a pass to Seahawks wide receiver Golden Tate in the end zone only to have it ruled a touchdown.
- The NFL said the next day Tate should have been called for interference.

NFL. Source says Jets could clean house of quarterbacks Tebow, Sanchez

Jets quarterbacks Tim Tebow, left, and Mark Sanchez. GETTY IMAGES FILE

Mark Sanchez is no longer the face of the New York Jets. He could soon be a former member of the team.

And Tim Tebow might even beat him out the door.

A person with knowledge of the situation told The Associated Press on Thursday that the Jets will consider all of their options regarding the two quarterbacks during the off-season. That means both Sanchez and Tebow are in limbo and trades cannot be ruled out.

The person, who requested anonymity because the team's personnel plans are private, told the AP that the Jets have not made any determinations involving Sanchez or Tebow.

The Jets could be hard-pressed to trade or cut Sanchez, who is due $8.25 million US in guarantees next season after having his contract extended last off-season.

There are no such complications with Tebow, who will likely be traded or released after just one season in New York. Tebow has two years remaining on his contract, but would cost the Jets only a little more than $1 million against the salary cap if cut.

"Anything dealing with the future past Buffalo (the regular-season finale) will be handled after that," coach Rex Ryan said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NBA

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d-Miami	17	6	.739	1
Atlanta	15	8	.652	3
d-Chicago	14	10	.583	4½
Milwaukee	13	11	.542	5½
Indiana	14	12	.538	5½
Brooklyn	13	12	.520	6
Boston	13	12	.520	6
Orlando	12	13	.480	7
Philadelphia	12	14	.462	7½
Toronto	8	19	.296	12
Charlotte	7	18	.280	12
Detroit	7	21	.250	13½
Cleveland	5	22	.185	15
Washington	3	20	.130	15

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
d-Oklahoma City	21	5	.808	Ñ
d-L.A. Clippers	19	6	.760	1½
d-Memphis	17	6	.739	2½
San Antonio	19	8	.704	2½
Golden State	17	9	.654	4
Minnesota	13	11	.542	7
Denver	14	12	.538	7
Houston	13	12	.520	7½
Utah	14	13	.519	7½
Portland	11	12	.478	8½
Dallas	12	14	.462	9
L.A. Lakers	12	14	.462	9
Phoenix	11	15	.423	10
Sacramento	8	17	.320	12½
New Orleans	5	20	.200	15½

Division leaders ranked in top three positions and best eight teams qualify for playoffs

Thursday's results
Minnesota 99, Oklahoma City 93
Miami 110, Dallas 95
Denver at Portland
Wednesday's results
Indiana 104 Utah 84
Toronto 97 Detroit 91
New York 100 Brooklyn 86
Orlando 90 Washington 83
Oklahoma City 100 Atlanta 92
Boston 103 Cleveland 91
Houston 125 Philadelphia 103
Phoenix 121 Charlotte 104
Memphis 90 Milwaukee 80
Sacramento 131 Golden State 127
L.A. Clippers 93 New Orleans 77
Friday's games — All Times Eastern
Atlanta at Philadelphia, 7 p.m.
Orlando at Toronto, 7 p.m.
Chicago at New York, 7:30 p.m.
Milwaukee at Boston, 7:30 p.m.
Washington at Detroit, 7:30 p.m.
Indiana at Cleveland, 7:30 p.m.
Dallas at Memphis, 8 p.m.
New Orleans at San Antonio, 8:30 p.m.
Charlotte at Golden State, 10:30 p.m.
Sacramento at L.A. Clippers, 10:30 p.m.
Saturday's games
Detroit at Washington, 7 p.m.
Chicago at Atlanta, 7 p.m.
Utah at Miami, 7:30 p.m.
Indiana at New Orleans, 8 p.m.
Memphis at Houston, 8 p.m.
Cleveland at Milwaukee, 8:30 p.m.
Charlotte at Denver, 9 p.m.
Phoenix at Portland, 10 p.m.
L.A. Lakers at Golden State, 10:30 p.m.
Sunday's games
Philadelphia at Brooklyn, 3 p.m.
Minnesota at New York, 5 p.m.
Utah at Orlando, 6 p.m.
Dallas at San Antonio, 7 p.m.
L.A. Clippers at Phoenix, 8 p.m.
Portland at Sacramento, 9 p.m.

LATE WEDNESDAY

RAPTORS 97, PISTONS 91

DETROIT (91)
Prince 3-6 3-4 9, Maxiell 2-6 2-4 6, Monroe 14-22 7-8 35, Knight 1-10 0-0 2, Singler 3-9 2-2 9, Stuckey 5-12 2-5 13, Drummond 2-3 2-7 6, Daye 1-6 0-0 3, Villanueva 4-10 0-0 8. Totals 35-84 18-30 91.
TORONTO (97)
Pietrus 2-3 2-2 7, Davis 5-7 1-2 11, Valanciunas 5-6 2-2 12, Calderon 2-8 1-1 7, DeRozan 10-19 1-2 23, Anderson 4-11 5-7 16, Kleiza 1-6 2-2 5, Lucas 1-5 0-0 2, Ross 4-6 0-0 9, Johnson 1-1 3-4 5. Totals 35-72 17-22 97.

Detroit	23	26	22	20—91
Toronto	27	22	24	24—97

3-Point Goals—Detroit 3-12 (Stuckey 1-1, Singler 1-2, Daye 1-3, Knight 0-1, Villanueva 0-5), Toronto 10-29 (Anderson 3-8, DeRozan 2-4, Calderon 2-5, Ross 1-1, Pietrus 1-2, Kleiza 1-6, Lucas 0-3). Fouled Out—Singler. Rebounds—Detroit 64 (Monroe 10), Toronto 39 (Johnson, Davis 9). Assists—Detroit 15 (Knight 6), Toronto 26 (Calderon 17). Total Fouls—Detroit 19, Toronto 24. Technicals—Drummond. A—17,062 (19,800).

AHL

Thursday's results
Lake Erie 4 Houston 3
Peoria 5 Charlotte 4 (SO)
Wednesday's results
Abbotsford 0 Chicago 1
St. John's 2 Adirondack 3
Springfield 2 Portland 3
Norfolk 0 Hershey 4
Albany 3 Bridgeport 4
Toronto 3 Lake Erie 4 (OT)
Rochester 2 Grand Rapids 4
W-B/Scranton 3 Binghamton 4
Rockford 3 Milwaukee 1
San Antonio 0 Texas 2
Friday's games — All Times Eastern
Connecticut at Manchester, 7 p.m.
San Antonio at Toronto, 7 p.m.
Peoria at Charlotte, 7 p.m.
Abbotsford at Grand Rapids, 7 p.m.
Binghamton at Rochester, 7:05 p.m.
Worcester at Providence, 7:05 p.m.
St. John's at Hamilton, 7:30 p.m.
Albany at Norfolk, 7:30 p.m.
Adirondack at Syracuse, 7:30 p.m.
Rockford at Milwaukee, 8 p.m.
Texas at Oklahoma City, 8 p.m.
Saturday, Dec. 22
St. John's at Toronto, 3 p.m.
Providence at Connecticut, 7 p.m.
Springfield at Hershey, 7 p.m.
San Antonio at Hamilton, 7 p.m.
Portland at Manchester, 7 p.m.
Adirondack at Bridgeport, 7 p.m.
Chicago at Grand Rapids, 7 p.m.
Rochester at Binghamton, 7:05 p.m.
Albany at Norfolk, 7:15 p.m.
Houston at Lake Erie, 7:30 p.m.
W-B/Scranton at Syracuse, 7:30 p.m.
Texas at Oklahoma City, 8 p.m.
Abbotsford at Rockford, 8:05 p.m.
Wednesday, Dec. 26
Hamilton at Toronto, 1 p.m.
Worcester at Manchester, 7 p.m.
W-B/Scranton at Hershey, 7 p.m.
Connecticut at Bridgeport, 7 p.m.
Syracuse at Binghamton, 7:05 p.m.
Lake Erie at Rochester, 7:05 p.m.
Texas at Houston, 8:05 p.m.

TRANSACTIONS

MLB

AMERICAN LEAGUE

BOSTON RED SOX—Promoted Jared Banner to assistant director, player personnel; Mike Murov to co-ordinator, baseball operations; Duncan Webb has been promoted to assistant director, player development; Laz Gutierrez to co-ordinator, player development programs. Tim Hyers to minor league hitting co-ordinator; George Lombard to minor league outfield and baserunning co-ordinator; Quincy Boyd and Jim Robinson to regional crosscheckers; Steve Peck to special assignment scout; Victor Rodriguez Jr. area supervisor and Dominican Republic crosschecker; Dave Klipstein to major league scout; Anthony Turco to professional scout. Named Mike Rikard national scouting co-ordinator; John Booher national cross-checker; Tom Kotchman, Brian Moehler, John Pyle and Willie Romay area scouts; Wilder Lobo, Ramon Mora and Alex Requena scouts in Venezuela; Carlos Lugo scout in the Dominican Republic; Dennis Neuman scout in Curacao and Aruba; and David Tapia scout in Mexico.
MINNESOTA TWINS—Agreed to terms with RHP Mike Pelfrey on a one-year contract.
TEXAS RANGERS—Agreed to terms with RHP Yoshinori Tateyama on a minor league contract.

NATIONAL LEAGUE

MIAMI MARLINS—Agreed to terms with 3B Placido Polanco on a one-year contract.
PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES—Agreed to terms with RHP Mike Adams on a two-year contract.

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION

WICHITA WINGNUTS—Signed INF Abel Nieves.

FRONTIER LEAGUE

GATEWAY GRIZZLIES—Signed RHP Zac Treece to a contract extension.
WASHINGTON WILD THINGS—Signed LHP Cory Caruso, C Rick Devereaux, OF Vinnie Fayard, RHP Justin Hall, OF Andrew Heck, 1B Mark Samuelson and RHP Orlando Santos to contract extensions.

NFL

BUFFALO BILLS—Placed CB Leodis McKelvin on injured reserve. Signed LB Kirk Morrison.
PHILADELPHIA EAGLES—Signed TE Evan Moore.
SEATTLE SEAHAWKS—Placed DE Jason Jones on injured reserve. Signed DT Hebron Fangupo from the practice squad. Signed WR Bryan Walters to the practice squad.

AHL

CONNECTICUT WHALE—Announced F J.T. Miller was reassigned to the U.S. National Junior Team.

ECHL

FLORIDA EVERBLADES—Announced G Pat Nagle was recalled by Syracuse (AHL).
READING ROYALS—Announced D Denny Urban was loaned to Worcester (AHL).

MLS

LA GALAXY—Signed F Gyasi Zardes.

U.S. COLLEGE

DEPAUW—Named Bill Lynch football coach.
LSU—Suspended P Brad Wing for the Chick-fil-A Bowl for an unspecified violation of team rules.
MINNESOTA STATE (MANKATO)—Named Nick Burns interim assistant director of athletic communications.
REGIS—Named Dan Flynn track and field coach.
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-KINGSVILLE—Announced athletic director Scott Gines will assume the title of vice-president for inter-collegiate athletics and campus recreation, effective Jan. 2.

SOCCER

SPAIN

LA LIGA

Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Barcelona	16	15	1	0	54	18	46
Atletico Madrid	16	12	1	3	36	17	37
Real Madrid	16	10	3	3	39	14	33
Malaga	16	8	4	4	25	10	28
Real Betis	16	9	1	6	25	26	28
Levante	17	8	3	6	21	24	27
Real Sociedad	17	7	4	6	24	20	25
Rayo Vallecano	17	8	1	8	22	32	25
Getafe	16	7	3	6	19	21	24
Valladolid	16	6	4	6	22	18	22
Valencia	16	6	3	7	19	24	21
Athletic Bilbao	16	6	3	7	21	32	21
Sevilla	17	5	4	8	22	26	19
Real Zaragoza	16	6	1	9	18	24	19
Celta Vigo	16	4	3	9	16	21	15
Espanyol	17	3	6	8	19	26	15
Osasuna	16	3	5	8	13	17	14
Granada	16	3	4	9	11	24	13
Mallorca	16	3	4	9	14	28	13
Deportivo	17	2	6	9	21	39	12

Thursday's results
Rayo Vallecano 3, Levante 0
Espanyol 2, Deportivo La Coruna 0
Real Sociedad 2, Sevilla 1
Friday's Games
Getafe at Valencia
Celta Vigo at Atletico Madrid
Saturday's Games
Mallorca at Real Betis
Barcelona at Valladolid
Real Madrid at Malaga
Granada at Osasuna
Zaragoza at Athletic Bilbao
Friday, Jan. 4
Real Zaragoza vs. Real Betis
Saturday, Jan. 5
Levante vs. Athletic Bilbao
Granada vs. Valencia
Deportivo La Coruna vs. Malaga
Sevilla vs. Osasuna
Sunday, Jan. 6
Celta Vigo vs. Valladolid
Real Madrid vs. Real Sociedad
Barcelona vs. Espanyol
Mallorca vs. Atletico Madrid
Monday, Jan. 7
Rayo Vallecano vs. Getafe

NFL

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

EAST

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
New England	10	4	0	.714	506	315
N.Y. Jets	6	8	0	.429	255	320
Miami	6	8	0	.429	264	279
Buffalo	5	9	0	.357	306	402

SOUTH

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Houston	12	2	0	.857	394	280
Indianapolis	9	5	0	.643	309	358
Tennessee	5	9	0	.357	285	396
Jacksonville	2	12	0	.143	219	383

NORTH

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Baltimore	9	5	0	.643	348	307
Cincinnati	8	6	0	.571	355	293
Pittsburgh	7	7	0	.500	302	291
Cleveland	5	9	0	.357	280	310

WEST

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Denver	11	3	0	.786	409	274
San Diego	5	9	0	.357	299	312
Oakland	4	10	0	.286	263	402
Kansas City	2	12	0	.143	195	367

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

EAST

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Washington	8	6	0	.571	381	350
Dallas	8	6	0	.571	327	338
N.Y. Giants	8	6	0	.571	373	304
Philadelphia	4	10	0	.286	253	375

SOUTH

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Atlanta	12	2	0	.857	371	259
New Orleans	6	8	0	.429	389	379
Tampa Bay	6	8	0	.429	354	349
Carolina	5	9	0	.357	296	319

NORTH

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Green Bay	10	4	0	.714	344	292
Minnesota	8	6	0	.571	319	308
Chicago	8	6	0	.571	321	240
Detroit	4	10	0	.286	330	380

WEST

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
San Francisco	10	3	1	.750	357	218
Seattle	9	5	0	.643	350	219
St. Louis	6	7	1	.464	258	315
Arizona	5	9	0	.357	224	302

x — clinched playoff berth; y — clinched division.

WEEK 16

Saturday's game — All Times Eastern
Atlanta at Detroit, 8:30 p.m.
Sunday's games
Minnesota at Houston, 1 p.m.
Tennessee at Green Bay, 1 p.m.
Oakland at Carolina, 1 p.m.
San Diego at N.Y. Jets, 1 p.m.
New England at Jacksonville, 1 p.m.
Indianapolis at Kansas City, 1 p.m.
New Orleans at Dallas, 1 p.m.
St. Louis at Tampa Bay, 1 p.m.
Buffalo at Miami, 1 p.m.
Cincinnati at Pittsburgh, 1 p.m.
Washington at Philadelphia, 1 p.m.
Cleveland at Denver, 4:05 p.m.
N.Y. Giants at Baltimore, 4:25 p.m.
Chicago at Arizona, 4:25 p.m.
San Francisco at Seattle, 8:20 p.m.

WEEK 17

Sunday, Dec. 30
Tampa Bay at Atlanta, 1 p.m.
N.Y. Jets at Buffalo, 1 p.m.
Baltimore at Cincinnati, 1 p.m.
Chicago at Detroit, 1 p.m.
Houston at Indianapolis, 1 p.m.
Green Bay at Minnesota, 1 p.m.
Miami at New England, 1 p.m.
Carolina at New Orleans, 1 p.m.
Philadelphia at N.Y. Giants, 1 p.m.
Cleveland at Pittsburgh, 1 p.m.
Jacksonville at Tennessee, 1 p.m.
Dallas at Washington, 1 p.m.
Kansas City at Denver, 4:15 p.m.
Oakland at San Diego, 4:15 p.m.
Arizona at San Francisco, 4:15 p.m.
St. Louis at Seattle, 4:15 p.m.
Note: Sunday night game to be determined
END OF REGULAR SEASON

HOCKEY

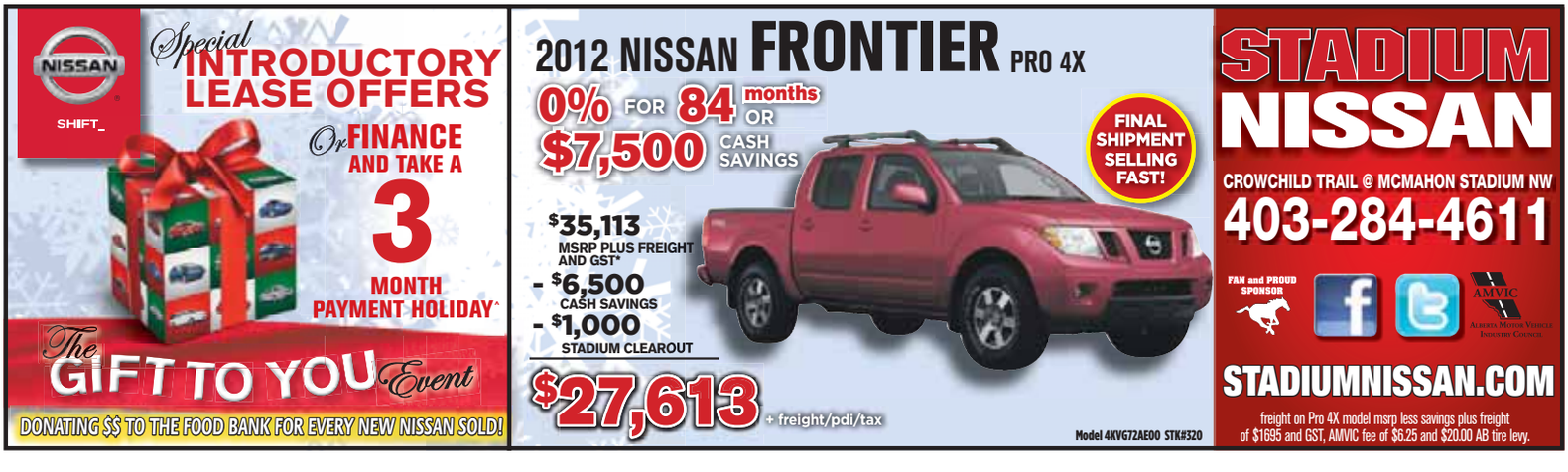
WORLD JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIP

EXHIBITION

At Vantaa, Finland
Finland 3 **Canada 2**

TEAM ROSTER

GOALTENDERS
Jordan Binnington, Richmond Hill, Ont., Owen Sound (OHL); Jake Paterson, Mississauga, Ont., Saginaw (OHL); Malcolm Subban, Toronto, Belleville (OHL).
DEFENCEMEN
Dougie Hamilton, Toronto, Niagara (OHL); Scott Harrington, Kingston, Ont., London (OHL); Ryan Murphy, Aurora, Ont., Kitchener (OHL); Xavier Ouellet, Terrebonne, Que., Blainville-Boisbriand (QMJHL); Griffin Reinhart, West Vancouver, B.C., Edmonton (WHL); Morgan Rielly, West Vancouver, B.C., Moose Jaw (WHL); Tyler Wotherspoon, Surrey, B.C., Portland (WHL).
FORWARDS
Anthony Camara, Toronto, Barrie (OHL); Phillip Danault, Victoriaville, Que., Victoriaville (QMJHL); Jonathan Drouin, Huberdeau, Que., Halifax (QMJHL); Jonathan Huberdeau, St-Jerome, Que., Saint John (QMJHL); Charles Hudon, Boisbriand, Que., Chicoutimi (QMJHL); Boone Jenner, Dorchester, Ont., Oshawa (OHL); JC Lipon, Regina, Kamloops (WHL); Nathan MacKinnon, Cole Harbour, N.S., Halifax (QMJHL); Ryan Nugent-Hopkins, Burnaby, B.C., Oklahoma City (AHL); Ty Rattie, Airdrie, Alta., Portland (WHL); Brett Ritchie, Orangeville, Ont., Niagara (OHL); Mark Scheifele, Kitchener, Ont., Barrie (OHL);Ryan Strome, Mississauga, Ont., Niagara (OHL).
HEAD COACH
Steve Spott, Waterloo, Ont., Kitchener (OHL)
ASSISTANT COACHES
Mario Duhamel, St-Bruno, Que., Drummondville (QMJHJ), Don Nachbauer, Prince George, B.C., Spokane (WHL); Andre Tourigny, Nicolet, Que., Rouyn-Noranda (QMJHL).
GOALTENDING COACH
Ron Tugnutt, Peterborough, Ont., Hockey Canada.



Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
Whatever your age or position, you are about to get the chance to move up in the world. Powerful people will be watching you closely today and over the weekend, so make sure they like what they see.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
Times are good and about to get even better. It may take two or three days for things to pick up speed but once they do, you will be on a roller coaster ride of fun and games. Hang on and enjoy the experience.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
Most likely you are reading too much into a situation that is of no real importance but for your own peace of mind, you should investigate further. If someone is trying to take you for a ride — get off quick!

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
You will notice a subtle change in the way other people react to you today. But it is the way that you choose to behave towards them that will determine whether the next few weeks are going to be easy or difficult.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
The Sun's change of signs puts the emphasis on matters of a work nature, and also on your physical health. The two are closely related. In a nutshell: If you work too hard your wellbeing may suffer. Slow down!

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
You don't have to do anything special today: The Sun's change of signs will do it all for you. One of the most active times of the year is about to begin, so prepare yourself mentally for what lies ahead.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
No matter how many interesting things may be taking place in the world, you must focus exclusively on the needs and desires of loved ones today. There has never been a better time to show how much you care.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 2 04 - Nov. 22
Keep your options open today because there will be all sorts of new and interesting events taking place and you need to be free to react to any or all of them. Part of the meaning of life is to have fun.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
The past few weeks have been hectic to say the least and the momentum you have built up will keep you going for quite some time. But don't forget you have limits.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
You may be eager to get started on a new project but think before you act. Make sure you are well prepared. Any day can be a new beginning. Though, yes, this one is more special than most.

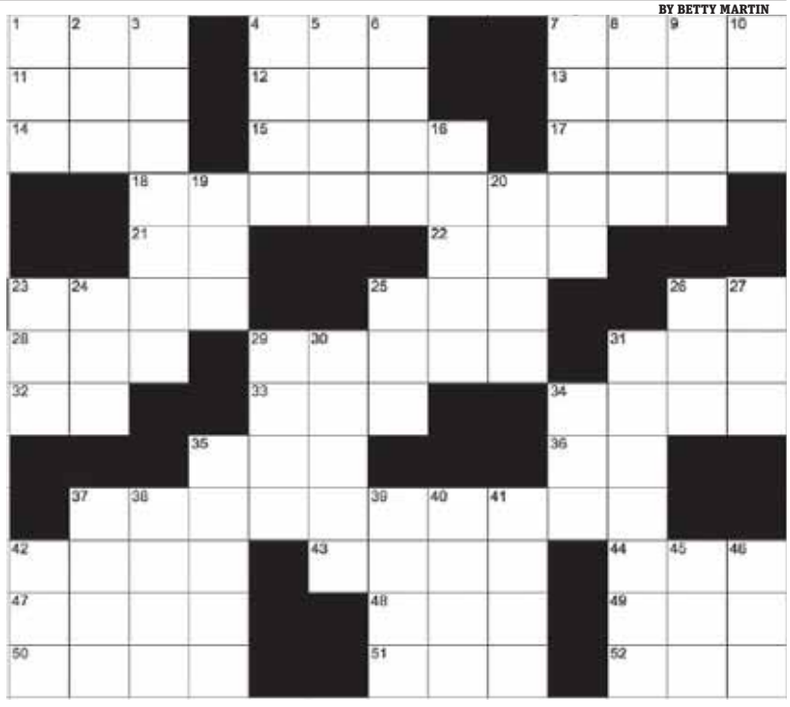
♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
You may be a bit more reclusive than usual today and over the weekend but there is no need to worry about it. You're not withdrawing from the world, you're just getting your thoughts and feelings in order.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
You seem to be having doubts about something that only a few days ago you thought was the best idea in the world. The good news is your doubts will pass very quickly and then you can get on and make it happen.

SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword

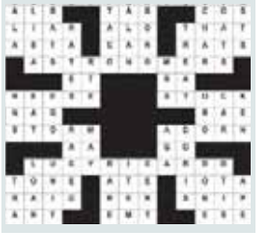
BY BETTY MARTIN



Across
1. Fishing need
4. To and —
7. Catch sight of
11. Silkworm
12. Make tracks
13. Desire
14. Schedule abbr.
15. Sale condition
17. Garfield pal
18. Seafarer's beacon
21. Disco proof of age (abbr.)
22. Select
23. Flintstone pet
25. Before
26. Magnum, P.I.'s pilot buddy
28. School subj.
29. — Acres
31. Cruise setting
32. Emergency room personnel (abbr.)
33. — Lingus
34. Smack a fly
35. Tavern brew
36. "Dirty Harry" actor (init.)
37. Eastern prov.
42. Cloak
43. Fashion magazine
44. Scottish cap
47. Barbra's "Funny Girl" co-star
48. Be indisposed
49. View
50. Hide
51. One of The Three Stooges
52. Family tree member (abbr.)

Down
1. Soak flax
2. Globe
3. Ringing up, old style
4. Flown at the 2012 Olympic games
5. Poison ivy result
6. Exclude
7. Whoop
8. Pea jackets
9. Mayberry boy
10. Casual top
16. Sandcastle spot
19. Wedding vows
20. Diner sign
23. German article
24. Quaint hotels
25. According to
26. Afternoon gathering
27. Garfield, for one
29. Elaborate party
30. Actress Witherspoon
31. Spring or Fall clothing
34. Chem. or biol.
35. Deviate
37. Point a finger at
38. October birthstone
39. Type of chowder
40. Stew
41. Prefix with confidence
42. Officer of the peace
45. Yes, to Angus
46. Actor Gibson

Yesterday's Crossword



What's online

See today's answers metronews.ca/answers.

Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

7		8	9				4	
		3			2			1
		1			6	3		
				3		5	8	
	9	6		5				
		9	7			6		
6			8			7		
	2				4	1		5

Yesterday's Sudoku

Weather

TODAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
MAX: -15° MIN: -17°	MAX: -15° MIN: -18°	MAX: -22 MIN: -29°

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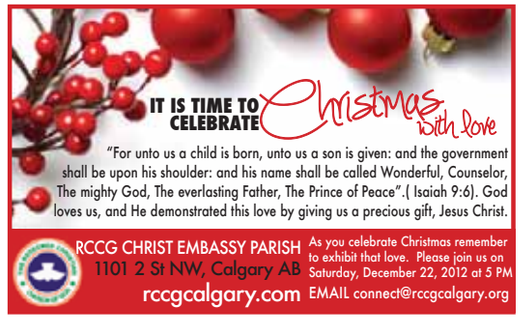

IT IS TIME TO CELEBRATE Christmas with love
"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace".(Isaiah 9:6). God loves us, and He demonstrated this love by giving us a precious gift, Jesus Christ.
RCCG CHRIST EMBASSY PARISH
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As you celebrate Christmas remember to exhibit that love. Please join us on Saturday, December 22, 2012 at 5 PM
EMAIL connect@rccgcalgary.org

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*Vehicles as shown are stock number N15311 (2013 X3 xDrive35i) and N15185 (2012 X5 xDrive50i). $10,000 BMW Retailers of Calgary purchase incentive is available on select in-stock 2012 X5 xDrive35i, X5 xDrive50i. BMW Retailers of Calgary purchase incentive will be deducted before taxes and CAN be combined with special finance (0.9% up to 60 months on 2012 X5 xDrive35i, X5 xDrive50i) offers. Retailer may sell for less. Offer is valid on select in-stock new/demo units only. 2012 BMW X5 xDrive35d models are excluded from this offer. BMW Retailers of Calgary cash purchase incentive is only valid until December 31, 2012. See your BMW Retailers of Calgary for full details. Vehicles not exactly as shown. Features and equipment may vary in Canada. "BMW", the BMW logo, BMW model designations and all other BMW related marks, images and symbols are the exclusive property and/or trademarks of BMW AG, used under licence. AMVIC LICENSED.